

Fatehnama and Zafarnama

by
Devinder Singh Duggal

FOREWORD

*Sirdar Kapaar Singh
National Professor of Sikhism*

**INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES
JALANDHAR**

The renewed interest in these epistles of Guru Gobind Singh, called 'Proclamation of total Conquest', Fatehnama, and 'Notification of complete success and victory', Zafarnama, springs not from mere historical curiosity but is rooted in the current mood of sensitive sikhs who instinctively feel that the current situation in which they find themselves in is, in some way, reminiscent of the phase of the Guru's career *a de Javu*, the feeling that it has happened before, where defeat and frustration was overcome through defiance and courage, conviction and high sense of commitment that led to victory and glory, self-fulfilment and panoply of power.

S. Devinder Singh Duggal M.A. has rendered these letters into English free verse and he has done it well, preserving the content and the spirit of the original as best as he could.

-Sirdar Kapur Singh

I.C.S.-Ex.

National Professor of Sikhism

Rs. 65

Fatehnama and Zafarnama

by
Devinder Singh Duggal

FOREWORD

*Sirdar Kapur Singh
National Professor of Sikhism*



INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES
JULLUNDUR

INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES

194-Udham Singh Nagar, Jullundur.

First Edition 1980

Price : Rs.



**Published by Amardeep Singh
for the Institute of Sikh Studies,
194-Udham Singh Nagar, Jullundur
and printed by Hamdard Press,
Jullundur.**

DEDICATED TO

those sacred souls who, in the true traditions of Sikhism, preferred to be dismembered alive, skinned alive, broken on the wheels alive, boiled alive, sawed alive and scalped alive, rather than bow to the brutal will of the tyrants.

C O N T E N T S

Foreword by Sirdar Kapur Singh

(i)—(x)

Preface by the author

(xi)—(xiv)

PART I

Life of Guru Gobind Singh

I. From Patna to Paonta

3—8

II. Baptism in Warfare

9—13

III. The Crowning Achievement

14—20

IV. Escalation of Conflict

21—36

V. End of the Journey

37—41

VI. Epilogue

42—58

PART II

VII. Fatehnama & Zafarnama

61—70

Texts and Translations

Fatehnama

71—84

Zafarnama

85—140

Notes & References

141—156

Index

157—160

— O —

FOREWORD

(By *Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh*,
M.A. (Punjab), M.A. (Cantab), Ex. ICS, Ex M.P.,
National Professor of Sikhism.)

Recently, I have been requested more than once, by young Sikh writers to say a few words to introduce their compositions referring to the two letters Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) wrote to Emperor Aurangzib (1626-1706), one called Fatehnama (December, 1704) and the other Zafarnama (May, 1705). This renewed interest in these documents, apparently, springs not from mere historical curiosity but is rooted in the current mood of sensitive Sikhs who instinctively feel that the current situation in which they find themselves is, in some way, reminiscent of the phase of the Guru's career a *de jaju*, the feeling that it has happened before, where defeat and frustration was overcome through defiance and courage, conviction and high sense of commitment that led to victory and glory, self-fulfilment and panoply of power.

2. Fatehnama and Zafarnama are the titles not integral to these communications of the Guru, but are mere generic tags which oriental tradition and courtesy attaches to documents issued by or on behalf of a sovereign to his leige. Guru Gobind Singh was the True King, *sacca padishah*, while Aurangzib, a mere mortal pretender to sovereignty over men, in the Sikh estimation, and, therefore, the Sikhs feel justified calling these epistles of Guru Gobind Singh as, 'Proclamation of total Conquest, 'Fateh-nama', and as the 'Notification of complete Success and Victory', 'Zafarnamah'.

3. S. Devinder Singh Duggal, M.A. has rendered these Letters into English free verse and he has done it well, preserving the content and the spirit of the original as best as he could, and the result is a readable rendition.

4. As a backdrop, S.Devinder Singh has prefaced his rendition with a life-sketch of Guru Gobind Singh, bringing out the salient points of the Guru's traditional history, so that his renditions of the Guru's communications to the Emperor might be properly appreciated.

5. The traditional history of Sikh chroniclers states that the first-letter, *Fatehnama*, that the Guru wrote at village Machhiwara in the Ludhiana district of the Punjab, was smuggled out of the close military vigilance by the Guru himself as he escaped to freedom into the Bhatinda desert, in the disguise of a renowned ~~Muslim~~ *Murid* holy man—*Pir-i-Ucca*—and then it was forwarded on to the far South in Deccan where Aurangzib was busy in attritious military operations against the Shia Muslim States. The chroniclers tell us that the Guru effected his escape with the aid of two of his Pathan devotees, while in disguise, and at one point, when detained by a military post for proper identification, was helped out by sayyid witness who swore a solemn and perjurous oath on the holy Koran to the effect that the suspected and detained person was not Guru Gobind Singh.

6. The names of these Pathan helpers and the sayyid perjurer are known, and for hundreds of years, their descendants have been receiving generous gifts and comforts from pious, affluent Sikhs as a token of appreciation and gratitude for their services rendered to the Guru.

7. These descendants, right from the early 18th century, down to the middle of the 20th century, when India was partitioned into two countries, Hindu India and Muslim India, rendering the Sikh identity as an infructuous irritant, have carried with them 'testimonials', *hukam-namahs*, claimed to have been authenticated by Guru Gobind Singh himself, certifying that the historical facts are, as the Chroniclers say, they are, and no body has cared or dared to doubt their genuineness till the

thirties of the 20th century, when the Sikh savant, Bhai Vir Singh sensed the intrinsic improbability and blemish of the story about Guru Gobind Singh escaping in disguise and said so.

8. It was at this stage that I wrote, in some vernacular journal that (1) Guru Gobind Singh never escaped in disguise as Pir-i-Ucca, out of the official vigilance ring operating in the area of Chamkaur-Machhiwara, and (2) that it was Bhai Daya Singh Pyara who, in the disguise of a Muslim Holyman smuggled the letter Fatehnama out of Punjab and then conveyed it to Aurangzib in the far off Deccan. This is the basis of Devinder Singh Duggal's statement in his book, that

"According to Sirdar Kapur Singh
Bhai Daya Singh was entrusted
with the task of delivering the
letter personally to Aurangzib".

9. Now a critical analysis of the evidence available in the form of chronicles and historical narratives that clearly leads to such a conclusion, is now briefly given below.

10. A piece of historical evidence cannot be properly evaluated unless its environmental back-drop and cultural parameter is precisely determined first. Perceptions and assertions are not made in a void or segregated situation; they inevitably are integrated to the cultural and mental loci and season of the period. Our Hindu idea of yuga 'the age', is based on this seminal insight and concept which postulates that, in a given period, men are compulsively motivated and oriented in accordance with broad fixed psycho-mental trends. It is to this idea, originally of ancient Upanisadic insight, that Guru Nanak refers in Asa di Var, *kali jug rathh agan ka kud agga rathavahu*: 'In the Kali-age, men are motivated by passion and driven by falsehood'. A.N. Whitehead in his: 'Science and the Modern World' has given us a phrase to express this phenomenon, 'mental climate'. The 'mental climate' of a period consists of those fundamental assumptions which are current in that period and which are accepted as self-evident and which form the common ground of attitudes and deeds of men during that period. Such

presumptions are not expressed and explained as explicit philosophies but nonetheless they form the basis of philosophies formulated, things said and done, and attitudes adopted, during that period. The chronicles and stories about the despatch of the *Fatehnama* and the episode of *Pir-i-Ucca*, cannot be an exception.

11. In confronting and dealing with the ruling Muslim class, the "turks" of Sikh phraseology, the Guru simply could not and would not take recourse to a disguise to escape from danger or to conceal his credal identity. He would not simulate or evade avowal of his identity, no matter how mortal the danger facing him or how compelling the claims of expediency, for, to do so, would belie his own teachings—the behests of God Almighty—*Kahio prabhu so bhakh hun ; kahio prabhu so main karon*, and to fear nothing, no man except God, is the bed-rock of these teachings. It must be remembered that only a day or so earlier, in his predicament at Chamkaur, the Guru had stoutly refused to leave the defensive mud walls into open safety without first throwing clear challenge to thousands of his enemies beleaguering him, trumpeting the defiance : "The Spiritual King of India and the Paracelete of Hindus now comes forth from behind the mud fortification and let him who cares and dares to obstruct his progress, advance and try" : *pirul hind nikasio javat ghero tum main jo balwan*. It may not be assumed that less than forty eight hours afterwards he would behave and act differently. The Guru was not a cyclothymic personality inclined to alternation of high and low spirits, wavering will and vacillating creed and conviction, of infirm character. Again, to assume the disguise of *Pir-i-Ucca* soon after composing the death-defying *Fatehnama* to the mighty Aurangzib, would make the Guru look ridiculous and contemptible in the eyes of Aurangzib, the staunch Sunni Muslim, who regarded the doctrine of Dissimulation and Disguise, *taqqieh*, as cowardly and un-koranic. The *taqqieh*, false disavowal of faith, pretention in religion, prudence in face of extreme danger, is the doctrine of Shia Muslims, on the authority of Koran (16.107)

wherein he who is 'coerced to disbelieve, while his heart finds peace in the faith' is deemed as not blameable. The Koran (3 : 8) speaks of two kinds of verses in it, the clear ones, *muhakmataha* and the obscure ones and multivocal, *mutshabihatu*, and Sunni Muslims, therefore, interpret this *taqqieh* doctrine verse, differently. The Sunni Muslims believe that when extreme and mortal danger confronts, that is the moment that lays an uncompromising obligation on a believer to avow openly his faith and through death confirm his faith, *shahadat*. This is precisely the Sikh doctrine also. The test of authenticity in Sikhism is unwavering, steadfast allegiance and adherence to truth, truth of thought, word and deed : *jujh maraon tau sac patijai*. The Guru, therefore, would never pretend to be or acquiesce in being represented as *Pir-i-Ucca*, under any circumstances whatsoever.

12. We have considered three reasons, so far, that militate against the literal acceptance of the chroniclers story, that the Guru escaped in disguise by pretending to be the *Pir-i-Ucca*, (1) the true structure of his firm, well-integrated non-cyclothymal character (2) the central doctrine of Sikhism that enjoins open, unfaltering avowal of faith and (3) extreme unlikelihood of a proud, self-regarding personality acting in a manner that degrades him in the estimation of his adversary. There is a fourth reason which is equally conclusive in the matter. We have Guru's own unambiguous declaration that his mission as commanded by God, is to educate and persuade mankind to follow 'the right way of life', the *panth*, the way of Dharma and Righteousness. In the *yakshaprashna* of the *Mahabharat*, the "panth" is explained as "the path traversed by good and true men in the days gone by" *mahajana yena gatah sah panthah*. In Islam, there is the concept, *sunnah*, of more or less, the same import. Literally it means, "the well-trodden path", but in Islamic terminology it signifies "the example set by the Prophet", and thus has arisen an abundance of tradition, *hadith*, attributed to the Prophet Mohammad. That what Mohammad did is its own ethical validity and signification of

high propriety. The presuppositions that support the concepts of **panth** and **sunna** constitute and determine the mental climate of Islamic world outlook and the Sikh weltanschauung. If, therefore, the Guru had escaped in disguise to avoid mortal danger or had disavowed directly or indirectly his true faith, there would have been no Sikh martyres submitting to being scalped alive, broken on the wheels or cut up limb by limb rather than buying safety through disavowal and dissimulation. Yet, there is not a single instance known in Sikh history where a true Sikh adopted dissimulation or disavowal to save his life. There are numerous true stories of Sikhs in recent times, the **Ghadarite** Sikhs including, who spurned suggestions of falsification of their appearances by casting away their Sikh symbols in order to evade police apprehension as unsikhlike. **Bhagat Singh** is called "the Great Martyre" by political Hindus because he succumbed to such suggestions of cowardly prudence, but **Bhagat Singh** himself, during his last days on earth, was sincerely repentent of his unsikhlike conduct. There is abundant evidence in the earlier Sikh history also showing that the contingent conduct of the Guru was accepted as providing guidelines of absolute Sikh rectitude not to be disregarded in any case. For instance, when **Guru Gobind Singh** firmly declined at **Chamkaur** (Dec. 1704) to save his own two sons from being killed in the battlefield, as long as other Sikhs were there to go out to battle, it became a firm precedent of categorical imperative never to regard safety of one's own family or kinsmen as a matter of priority or preference where there was a question of panthic integrity or image involved. As **Rattan Singh Bhangoo** tells us in his **Panth Parkash (Sakhi Jamber : 29)** martyre **Subeg Singh** stoutly declined to save the life of his son, **Shahbaz Singh**, simply to keep his own family line going. His reply was : "the Guru did not care to keep his own family line going, how can I, a mere Sikh, do so ? **Ham karan gur kulhe gavai, haun kul rakhon kavan yadai ?** About **Jassa Singh Ahluwalia**, we are told, (**Sakhi Wadda Ghalughara : 86**) that he refused to move his horse at a quicker pace in face

of overwhelming danger, as Guru Gobind Singh had refused to do so when similarly situated during his progress towards the present Mukatsar (Jan., 1705). This contingent conduct of the Guru has had the force of a categorical imperative for the Sikhs, not to panic or show signs of fear, no matter how overpowering the odds. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia's response was (1762): "If I now quicken the pace in our tactical retreat, I shall be looked down upon by all true Sikhs for running away from danger and death in panic and fear": *sara Panth karego ttattha, ghora bhajai Jassa Singh nattha*. It was precisely this *hadith*, tradition or *panth* of the Guru which a handful of 21 Sikhs at Saragarhi (1897) followed when they fought with eight thousand Orakzai Pathans for seven hours, to the last man, without surrendering. The story as related by the chroniclers, therefore, about the Pir-i-Ucca episode simply cannot be accepted as in its literality, and was fact, never accepted true by the firm consensus of the Sikhs of the contemporary era and of the days of yore.

13. There is yet another, the fifth supportive reason extracted from the Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Law of Evidence and Islamic Penal Code. The Pir-i-Ucca chronicle states that the two Pathan devotees of the Guru, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, aided the escape of the Guru in disguise and a sayyid of high respectability of the locality, Qazi Pir Mohammad of village Saloh, testified falsely by a solemn oath on Koran that the Guru disguised as the Pir-i-Ucca, was certainly not Guru Gobind Singh. Even the 'A short History Of the Sikhs' by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh (1, 74) naively swallows this story. This testimony was absolutely conclusive and credible, both according to Islamic Law Of Evidence as well as when viewed in the light of rules of evidentiary interpretation. The Islamic Law is called 'Shariah', which term literally means "the path leading to watering place", in other words, 'the source of life'. This Shariah has four roots, the Koran, the Sunnah, the Qiyas (analogical reasoning) and the Ijma, the communal consensus, that is on what the generality of Muslims agree.

These are the sources of the corpus of Islamic Law. In the matter of Procedure and Evidence, the Islamic Law requires two witnesses to testify orally to their direct knowledge of the truth of their statements, but in exceptional cases, this testimony *shahadah*, could be of one person only in order to be conclusive. Although democratic equality of Islam is its most outstanding characteristic, in the case of sayyids, there is a concession. The descendants of the Prophet and his relatives form a special class, held in social reverence and high status carefully guarded and accepted. The Koran (4 ; 136) enjoins upon believers "to be witnesses for Allah even though it be against yourselves", and not 'to conceal the truth or evade it". Sayyid Pir Mohammad of Saloh gave such a testimony, by placing his hands solemnly on the holy Koran and he also had been a tutor of Persian of Guru Gobind Singh and thus could speak conclusively in the matter of identification of the Guru. Thus it was that the person styled as the Pir-i-Ucca was proved as not Guru Gobind Singh in person.

14. In the Islamic Penal Code, for six specific crimes the punishment is fixed, *hadd*, , and punishment for apostasy, which on the basis of *qiyas*, includes false oath on the Koran by a sayyid, is death. In this there is no discretion. Again to abet, concealment and escape of a rebel against the State, who had declared war on the Islamic authority of the Delhi Mughal throne, *mara juz b shamshir kare na mand*, was and is an act of high treason for which the punishment is death, without discretion. Sayyid Pir Mohammad by doing what he did, according to Sikh chronicles, had earned instant death at the hands of the Mughal authorities, in the year 1703, and yet, by all accounts, he survived without harm or molestation and enjoyed a natural span of life. The two Pathans, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, likewise did not attract the attention of the State authorities though they were clearly guilty of high treason on account of having aided the escape of a dangerous and powerful enemy of the State. That the Mughal and Muslim populace rose in wild and angry insurgency against all those suspected of

being sympathisers of the Guru, at this time, is recorded in contemporary records ; the entire family of Syed Pir Badruddin of Sadhaura was killed and his family properties destroyed.

15. It is obvious to the critical understanding that the Mughal authorities as well as the politically sensitive Muslim populace were well aware that in the *Pir-i-Ucca* episode, Syed Pir Mohammad had truly testified that there was no such occurrence as Guru Gobind Singh's escape in disguise and the two Pathans were not instrumental in aiding the Guru to escape in disguise.

16. Thus it becomes evident that it was the messenger of the Guru, Bhai Dya Singh, who assumed the disguise of a holy man and who was helped to escape local military vigilance in a manner, normal and honourable in such a situation, and that Syed Pir Mohammad had rendered true testimony as enjoined by the Koran, when he solemnly testified that Bhai Daya Singh was not Guru Gobind Singh.

17. Guru Gobind Singh's own testimony on the point also is clear and conclusive. In his second letter to Aurangzib the Guru tells the Emperor that during his progress from Chamkaur (Dec., 1704) to Bhatinda desert (May, 1705), he "met with no impediment or harm whatsoever", *na picideh mue na ranjideh tan*. This sixth and the last reasoning clinches the issue in the matter of this *Pir-i-Ucca* episode showing that although the Sikh chroniclers are correct in giving almost all the material details they have given, they have erred in equating the *Pir-i Ucca* person with the Guru.

18. The crux of the objectivity in history is that the facts of history cannot be purely objective, since they become facts of history only in virtue of the significance attached to them by the historians. Objectivity in history cannot be objectivity of fact, it is not simply getting one's facts right but an objectivity of relation between fact and interpretation, between past, present and future. The absolute in history is not something in the past from which we start ; it is not something in the present, since all present thinking is necessarily relative. It is something

(x)

still incomplete and in the process of becoming something in future towards which we move, which begins to take shape only as we move towards it and in the light of which we move forward, and as we thus move, we gradually shape our interpretation of the past. The historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future. Our chroniclers and our modern Sikh historians said what they saw or heard, but they lacked the skill of critical appraisal, the art of interpreting through relating the past, through the Present with the future, and the result has been sorry confusion in and serious damage to the objectivity and quality of Sikh history. To restore the Sikh history to its true pedestal and stadium is the real task before Sikh historian today.

Kapur Singh

National Professor of Sikhism

707/XI-Chandigarh

13th APRIL, 1980.

P R E F A C E

For a long time last and more particularly in recent years, the relevance and the validity of all moral and ethical values is being challenged. Their contents and their scope have been changing like clouds before the wind. Honesty and integrity, chastity and modesty, gallantry and chivalry have fallen into low repute and, to-day, vice is masquerading as virtue, perfidy as probity and trickery as truth. In this context George Barnard Shaw's observation that 'Good has become evil in our eyes and is being undone in the name of progress', appears to be more valid to-day than ever before. There is now a growing acceptance of Nietzsche's assertion that 'It is a mistake to regard it as a duty to aim at the victory of good and the annihilation of evil'.

While the changing pattern of the social, economic and international relations, as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution and the rise and growth of National States, have caused a shift in these values, the failure of the Custodians of the socio-spiritual ethics to guard the treasures of humanity, scrupulously, has also led to their defacement and defilement. Machiavellism and Marxism have contributed further to dethrone them by eulogizing the virtues of Materialism as against the morality of means. Man is, to-day, involved in a mad race for material gains, the unlimited prospects of which have been brought within his easy reach through phenomenal progress in the field of science. However, the growing degeneration on the ethico-moral plane has made it increasingly difficult for the modern Man to enjoy the fruits of his own material achievements.

More than ever before, he is lying in constant fear of total annihilation, alongwith all living species and all that he has been able to create through his efforts extending over thousands of years. The majesty of materialism has grown at the expense of the sanctity and stability of the Soul and hence the present predicament of the modern Man. Common irreligion, to day, therefore, threatens to destroy Man and his civilization and a common religion only can save them.

To escape from this predicament, Man is, to-day, groping for a workable and viable International socio-political Order, based upon a minimum of mutually agreed principles. Some International agencies, for such a purpose, have taken shape, but, as yet, they are too precariously perched to be able to hold out any real hope to Man. The all too conspicuous emphasis on the parochial and sectarian interests as against, and not unoften, even at the expense of universally valid moral values has not, so far, allowed these bodies to make much of an impact on the course of the ultimate destiny of man. The prospects for his safe and secure future continue to be as bleak as ever before, if not actually more. Unless and until the need and validity of some universal code of ethics, governing the relations between man and man as also the man and the state is not recognized, the threat of total destruction would continue to hang over his head like the proverbial sword.

Realizing the need of combating the dangers of such crises in the affairs of man, Guru Gobind Singh, about three hundred years before, laid particular stress on the importance of persuing ethical activity, notwithstanding any compulsions or contingencies which, according to him, is closely related to the rise and fall of the people and civilisations. It is in this context that in the daily Congregational Prayer, formulated by Guru Gobind Singh himself, the Sikhs invoke the blessings of the Lord thus: 'May the dispositions of the Sikhs remain under the control of the ethical reason, and the ethical reason, under the guidance of God, for ever and for ever, Amen'. The Guru himself ever prayed to God

Almighty to 'Grant me the strength to pursue ethical conduct..... and, if the need arises, to lay down my very life in defence of such a course ! In his famous Persian compositions—Fatehnama and Zafarnama—the then reigning monarch, Aurangzeb, has been strongly denounced for destroying the social and state health through his immoral and unethical means to secure material advantages. Throughout his life, the Great Prophet of the people, had been struggling, at immense personal sufferings and sacrifices, to save humanity from the jaws of such immoral and invidious forces.

For obvious reasons the need to reiterate dedication to the Ideals enshrined in these sacred texts cannot be over emphasised. Unfortunately, under the impact of the forces of neonationalism in India, the Persian language has been deliberately edged out of its borders and as such the new generations are unable to profit by the rich treasures belonging to the domains of the language which, for centuries, had been the principle vehicle of thought and expression in this Land. Fatehnama and Zafarnama have been translated into English verse to open up the treasures of their philosophy to those who do not hold the key to the language of the original texts and also to reiterate its continuing validity to the current problems of mankind. Every attempt has been made in these translations, to capture the tenor and temper of the original texts. However, the author is fully aware that his Persian Carpet cannot be so magic as to waft him anywhere near the plane of the Holy Author of these compositions. Nevertheless, it is sincerely hoped that his humble effort would be well received and prove rewarding. In part I of the book a modestly detailed account of the life and work of Guru Gobind Singh has been provided to help the readers for a fuller appreciation of his Persian compositions and the eternal message enshrined therein. It may also enable them to rediscover the invincible spirit of the Prophet and the abiding truth that the cause of social and the spiritual honour is intrinsically linked with willingness on our part to uphold Good and to combat Evil.

The author is highly obliged to Bhai Sahib Sirdar Kapur Singh, National Professor of Sikhism, who, at his request, very kindly agreed to write the Introduction and thus condescended to lend the luster of his name to this humble effort. The introduction, in itself, is a detailed and penetrating thesis on the Pir i Ucca episode connected with the life of Guru Gobind Singh. In his characteristically bold and brilliant manner the renowned scholar has endeavoured to remove the age-old cobwebs of incorrect history covering the march of the Xth Master from Machhiwara to the waste land of Bhatinda. The traditional accounts of Sikh history are full of such inaccuracies and it is high time that the Sikh scholars with suitable mental stature and access to source material, should realize the need of taking up the challenge to restore the Sikh history to 'its true pedestal and stadium'.

Jullundur.

194, Udham Singh Nagar.

Devinder Singh Duggal

M.A.

PART I
LIFE
OF
GURU GOBIND SINGH

CHAPTER I

FROM PATNA TO PAONTA

On December 22nd, in the year of grace 1666,¹ Syed Bhikhan Shah, a Muslim divine of Kuhram, while offering his prayers, bowed reverently towards the east instead of westwards as is customary with the Muslims. When questioned about this apparent act of apostacy on his part, by his bewildered disciples, he is reported to have told them that he had had a vision about the birth of a new Prophet in the east, at Patna, to whom he was offering his obeisance. Having vowed to deny himself food or rest till he had found out the new Prophet, the Syed set out for Patna where he intuitively walked straight to the house he was seeking. When conducted into the presence of the new born child, the Muslim Saint placed before him two pots, one of milk and the other of water. The Child, Gobind Rai, as he was then named, playfully placed each of his tiny hands on the two vessels. Syed Bhikhan Shah felt elated and explained that the child Prophet, by his gesture, has assured him that he would bear an equal amount of love for the Hindus and the Muslims both, as indeed for all mankind. Thereafter till his death, the Syed remained an ardent follower of the Xth Nanak—Guru Gobind Singh, as this Prophet was later known.²

At the time of the birth of his son, Gobind Rai, Guru Tegh Bahadur, during the course of his Eastern tour, was camping at Dacca³ where he received the happy news through special emissaries, Bhai Mehar Chand and Bhai Kalyan Chand. He offered prayers of thanks giving to God and blessed the Child

and the 'Sangat' of Patna, where he had stationed his family while himself proceeding further east from Punjab on Oct., 2nd 1665. He did not, however, cut short his tour as he was engaged in reviving the religious centres established earlier by Guru Nanak in those areas, and, thus, ministering to the spiritual needs of the people. His efforts were further directed towards restoring peace and tranquility in that region, then torn by strife and mutual warfare.

The ascendancy of Aurangzeb to the Imperial throne in 1659 A. D., marked the complete reversal of the policy of conciliation and comparative toleration, initiated and pursued by Akbar, towards his non-muslim subjects. Although during the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan the Muslim reactionaries and revivalists, spearheaded by Sheikh Faizi Sirhindi, 'Mujaddad-i-Alf Sani', according to whom even a slight concession to the non-Muslims was an act of hostility to Islam,⁴ had succeeded in bringing about a shift in the attitude of the State towards the non-Muslim subjects, but it was only under Aurangzeb that the wheel could take a complete turn. In Aurangzeb they had found a monarch matching their mission and the non-Muslim subjects were now feeling their weight in full measure. In 1670 A.D. the Emperor issued an edict prohibiting the construction of any new temple and ordering the demolition of the old.⁵ Also, through measures highly prejudicial to their interests, the non-Muslim subjects were being coerced to abjure their Faith and accept the folds of Islam. According to Khafi Khan, the King also ordered the Sikh Gurudwaras to be destroyed and the Guru's agents prevented from collecting the voluntary offerings of the devotees⁶. Such Imperial orders, in the hands of the over-zealous and unscrupulous provincial governors, assumed awesome dimensions and the non-Muslim populace had to labour under a sense of growing insecurity and fear.

Under such circumstances Guru Tegh Bahadur could not afford to be away from Punjab which was the cradle of the Faith of which he was the Head. He, therefore, decided to reach Punjab post haste. En route, he had a brief halt at Patna where,

for the first time, he saw his child, Gobind Rai, who had grown to be about three years of age. Blessing his son, he left for Punjab leaving instructions with his family to follow him there at the earliest. Accordingly very soon, thereafter, the whole family was united at Anandpur where suitable arrangements for the education and upbringing of Gobind Rai were promptly made⁷ with remarkable response from the promising Child.

The marked shift in the stance of the State towards its non-Muslim subjects led to wide-spread panic among them. They were feeling helpless and lost with no body around to take up their cause and lend them courage. Back in Punjab, Guru Tegh Bahadur felt their agony and was deeply touched by it. He decided to stand by them in their hour of need and for this purpose, undertook extensive tour, especially of the Malwa tract, to lend them heart and hope. He assured them of his unflinching support and asked them to eschew fear. 'Fear not and Frighten⁸ not', he exhorted them. In him the people saw a saviour and began to gather around him with faith and hope. The mission of the Guru and his growing influence among the people caught the eye of the officials and they promptly brought it to the notice of the King who summoned him to Delhi where he and his close associates were confronted with a choice between death and Islam. When the Guru refused to submit to the brutal will of the ill-advised King, he was publically executed in Chandani Chowk, on 11th November, 1675. Bhai Dayal Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Mati Das, his closest disciples, were boiled, burnt and sawn alive to death respectively.⁹

Referring to the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh his son and successor says in his autobiography, Vachittar Natak :¹⁰

*"To protect their right to wear their frontal mark and the
sacred thread,*

Did he, in the Dark age, perform the supreme sacrifice ;

To protect the good he spared no pains

Gave his head but never cried in pain

*For the protection of the righteousness he did the noble
deed,*

He gave his head but not his Ideal."

Before his death, Guru Tegh Bahadur had appointed his son, Gobind Rai, then aged just about nine years, as his successor. The martyrdom of his holy father and his closest associates in a brutal manner was indicative of the temper of the State towards the Sikhs. The internal dissensions among them, as a result of mis-placed ambitions and family rivalries,¹¹ were equally disconcerting. The hostility of the Hindu hill chieftains towards the House of Guru Nanak for its insistence to cut across all distinctions of caste and creed added further to the difficulties of the young Guru. Such a formidable array of inimical forces would have overwhelmed any lesser soul, but Guru Gobind Singh was cast in a different mould. He was born with a divine mission,

"To spread religion

*And to uproot evil seekers."*¹²

The young Guru firmly made it known that he must accomplish his Divine Mission and that the threats of fear or force cannot deter him from 'speaking the Truth.'¹³ He took up the challenge in right earnest and began to prepare himself and his people for the great task ahead. Purging all corrupt elements from among his ranks, he took up firm stand against all imposters who staked claims to the Spiritual throne of Guru Nanak. In his 'Hukamnamas' to the Sikhs, he asked them to come to his presence fully armed and made known his preference for arms as against other things as offerings from his disciples. Eversince the times of Guru Hargobind, a small body of armed persons always stood by the Guru. The ranks of this small army now began to swell and its effectiveness was sought to be perfected through hard discipline and training. Himself, the Guru acquired outstanding skill in the use of arms and the various arts of war. Side by side, he excelled in literary pursuits and Spiritual domains. The Guru's court at Anandpur became the centre of people, deeply religious, but now becoming increasingly determined to take up the challenge of the evil and aggressive forces, if and when called upon to do so.

The seat of the Guru, Anandpur, was situated in the state of Kahlur, then enjoying very limited internal autonomy, alongwith other similar hill principalities, which, otherwise, were part of the Mughal empire. These hill states were obliged to pay tributes to the Mughal overlords. The state of Kahlur was then being administered by Raja Bhim Chand from whose father, Dip Chand, Guru Tegh Bahadur had bought the site of Anandpur, then known as Makhawal, where he established another Sikh centre, besides the one already at Kiratpur, situated in the State of Hindur, with which Kahlur was not on good terms. Guru Tegh Bahadur had stayed at Makhawal for sometime before he left for the eastern tour.¹⁴

Bhim Chand did not look with equanimity the growing influence of the Sikhs under Guru Gobind Singh because of their continued good relations with the State of Hindur and also because of their emphasis on the establishment of a casteless and classless society, which was at complete variance with the basic beliefs of the Hindu orthodoxy, owing inalienable allegiance to the precepts of 'Varanasharm Dharma'. Bhim Chand was, therefore, preparing to oust the Guru from his domains, on some pretext,¹⁵ with or without the help of the other orthodox Hindu hill chieftains. Guru Gobind Singh saw through these designs and made known, in no uncertain terms, his firm resolve to resist and frustrate any such attempt which he regarded as an outrage on the integrity of his Faith.

In the middle of 1685 A. D., Raja Medani Parkash of Nahan, whose relations with Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar (Garhwal) were strained, invited Guru Gobind Singh to his State with the view that the presence of the Sikhs in his domains may deter his adversary, Fateh Shah, to embark upon any aggressive attempts against the integrity of his State.¹⁶ Guru Gobind Singh thought it expedient to accept the invitation in the hope that his absence might help restore normalcy in his relations with the State of Kahlur. Therefore, deputing suitable guards for the defence of Anandpur, he set out for Nahan accompanied by his minister, Nand Chand, his relatives and five hundred Udasi

Sikhs. Deeply impressed by its landscape and its enchanting surroundings, the Guru set up his camp on the banks of river Yamuna, near Paonta. Raja Medni Parkash urged Guru Gobind Singh to stay there for a longer period and extended him all help, with men and material, for the construction of a fort for housing him and his men, which, now, included five hundred Pathans, employed at the request of Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura, who was an ardent devotee of the Guru.

Deeply impressed by the Guru's repute, Raja Fateh Shah paid him a visit at Paonta. Guru Gobind Singh availed of the opportunity to bring about reapproachment between him and the Raja of Nahan, both of whom promised to live in peace and mutual goodwill.

The presence of Guru Gobind Singh at Paonta also enabled Ram Rai, then staying at Dehra Dun in the State of Fateh Shah, to patch up his differences with the Guru by recognising him the undisputed and rightful head of the House of Guru Nanak.¹⁷

During his protracted stay at Paonta, lasting for about three years,¹⁸ a large number of poets and literati gathered in his court which became the centre of highly creative literary activities. The Guru himself also wrote extensively at this place. Many of his well known compositions like *Chandi di Var*, *Shastar Nam Mala*, *Chaupais* and *dohas* and *Krishan Avtar* are the products of this place. In the last verse of the *Krishan Avtar*, Guru Gobind Singh says that 'the translation of *Bhagvat* has been undertaken with no other purpose than that of war for the sake of *Dharma*.'¹⁹

The mood of the Guru is quite apparent. He would not countenance any threat to the treasures of his Faith.

CHAPTER II

BAPTISM IN WARFARE

Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar, for reasons not quite clear, decided to repudiate his agreement with the State of Nahan and recover all the disputed areas from it. He could not do so without coming into conflict with the Guru's men who were camping at Paonta situated almost on the frontier of the two states. Meanwhile the marriage of Bhim Chand's son was solemnized with the daughter of Raja Fateh Shah who, notwithstanding his cordial relations with Guru Gobind Singh, refused to accept the rich presents of the Guru sent on the occasion, possibly on the insistence of Bhim Chand. The Guru also received intelligence that all the hill Chiefs gathered on the occasion of the marriage had resolved, at the behest of Bhim Chand, to launch a combined attack on him.

To meet this wanton and unprovoked threat of aggression, the Guru decided to deploy his men, six miles to the north-east, at a place known as Bhangani. On the eve of the crucial armed conflict, the body of the Pathans taken into service at the behest of Pir Budhu Shah, deserted en-block, including their leaders, Hayat Khan and Najabat Khan, and joined the enemy ranks. The Udasi group, too, lost heart and left the Guru's camp, except their leader, Kirpal. Undeterred, Guru Gobind Singh took up the challenge with the help of the hardcore of his followers who had come with him from Anandpur and inflicted a convincing defeat on the enemy who fled from the field, leaving behind

dead, a number of its more prominent and boastful leaders like Raja Hari Chand, Hayat Khan and Najabat Khan.¹ During the thick of war a sizeable contingent of men, including his sons, were sent by Pir Budhu Shah to reinforce the ranks of Guru Gobind Singh. They played a very useful role in the war which earned for the Saint suitable honours at the hands of the Guru.

In his autobiography—*Vachittar Natak*—Guru Gobind Singh gives a very vivid and graphic account of this battle. The resounding victory over the combined forces of the hill Chiefs helped the Sikhs to rediscover themselves and be enthused with a renewed sense of courage and confidence to face the future challenges.

Guru Gobind Singh now decided to leave the State of Nahan for, among other reasons, he was disillusioned with the attitude of its chief—Medni Parkash. He not only kept himself away from the armed conflict at Bhangani, but also seemed to be reluctant to see the Guru even after the event—perhaps for fear of antagonizing Raja Fateh Shah.

Guru Gobind Singh was back at Anandpur² late in 1688 A.D. Meanwhile, Bhim Chand was advised by his counsailors to seek rapprochement with the Guru. He saw through the advisability of such a course and after broaching the matter through his envoy, personally came to Anandpur to pay homage to the Guru and seek settlement with him. He was received cordially by the Guru who bestowed on him a robe of honour. An understanding seems to have been reached between the two.³ The amicability reached with Bhim Chand enabled the Guru to fortify the arrangements for the defence of Anandpur. A chain of forts were built around it and they were stocked with arms and ammunitions.⁴

For many a year last, Aurangzeb had been busy in the wars of Deccan and his continued absence in the South, away from his Capital, encouraged the hill Chiefs to withhold payments of tributes which they were obliged to pay to the Mughal Emperor.⁵ As the arrears mounted, the Emperor directed the Governor of Jammu, Mian Khan, to take appropriate measures to recover them. The Governor despatched a strong force under Alif Khan

for the purpose. Alif Khan started with an expedition against the Kangra Chief who capitulated and joined his ranks along with Dyal, the chief of BIJHAWAR.

To meet the impending attack on them, the other hill Rajas rallied behind Bhim Chand who solicited the help of Guru Gobind Singh, also, which was granted⁶. The two sides clashed near NADAUN, twenty miles to the south east of Kangra. Bhim Chand appeared to be in great difficulty against the relentless pressure of the enemy. When he was losing ground in the thick of war, Guru Gobind Singh turned the tables by killing Dyal—the Raja of Bijhawar. Alif Khan now had no choice but to make a hasty retreat under cover of darkness.

Guru Gobind Singh returned to Anandpur where he learnt to his great dismay that Bhim Chand had concluded peace with Alif Khan⁷ by agreeing to pay the arrears of tribute and recognizing the Mughal Overlordship. If anything, it very clearly showed that the hill chieftains could not be relied upon. The Guru decided to trust only his own arms.

The growing influence of Guru Gobind Singh was brought to the notice of Aurangzeb by the elements inimically disposed to the House of Guru Nanak, in a manner which prompted him to issue instructions to his Faujdars, in 1693 A.D., to prevent Gobind from assembling his Sikhs.⁸ Dilawar Khan, the Faujdar of Kangra, sent an 11,000 strong expedition against the Guru under the command of his son. The advance of the Mughal force un-nerved many a person and they preferred to leave Anandpur. However, the bulk of the Sikhs Challenged the Mughals on the banks of river Sutlej and according to the Guru 'the bloody Khan fled with his weapons unused. Through the Grace of God the wretched fool did not even touch me'.⁹

The infuriated Dilawar Khan sent another expedition now under the command of Hussain Khan, the ablest commander with Kangra Faujdar. To meet the demands of this expedition, Dilawar Khan seems to have asked Hussain Khan to collect some sort of war levy, on his way to Anandpur, from the Rajas of the hill states. That probably explains why Hussain Khan

got involved in wars with the hill chiefs while proceeding on an expedition against the Guru.¹⁰ Hussain Khan plundered village after village and after subduing the state of Kangra, he advanced towards Kehlur. Bhim Chand lost heart and agreed to meet all the demands of the Mughal general. Most of the other Rajput princes also thought it prudent to follow suit. However, the Rajas of Guler and Jaswan, because of the excessive burden of demands on them, were forced into a fight with the Mughal forces.¹¹ The Guru, at their request, lent his support to the rebel princes. In the ensuing battle, Hussain Khan and the Kangra chief fell in the field, while Bhim Chand had to flee for his life. Bhai Sangtia and his associates were also killed in the battle, but 'The clouds of battle did not burst over Anandpur.'¹²

Exasperated at the repeated reverses, Dilawar Khan tried to retrieve his position by sending yet another expedition against the state of Jaswan, which, however, ended as ignominiously as the previous attempts. Its commanders were killed while retreating.

The repeated set backs suffered by the Mughal forces in the hills seems to have disturbed Aurangzeb, who, in order to rehabilitate the imperial sway over these territories, commissioned his son, prince Muazzam, for the purpose.¹³ The prince reached Lahore in August 1696 A.D. and therefrom launched the campaign against recalcitrant states of the hills.¹⁴ According to 'GUR BILAS' he gave specific orders to his general, Mirza Beg, to avoid conflict with Guru Gobind Singh, perhaps due to the intercession of Bhai Nand Lal, a devoted disciple of the Guru, who had been once in the employment of the Prince.¹⁵

After the departure of the Prince from Lahore in 1697 A.D., comparative peace prevailed in the Shivalik hills for a little over two years. During this period, free from the shadows of war, Guru Gobind Singh engaged himself in literary activity, besides his missionary duties as the leader of a socio-religious fraternity. No body, however, could have guessed that while writing Bachittar Natak and Ram Avtar, in this period, the mind of the Guru was actually set on giving the final shape to

the Order of which the foundation was laid by Guru Nanak. On 30th March 1699 A.D., when, on the Baisakhi eve, the Xth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, instituted the Order of Khalsa, after testing the mettle of the 'Followers of the Faith' through an awe-inspiring call for a walk through the valley of death, the Faith of Guru Nanak had come of age.

CHAPTER III

THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

Guru Nanak and his successors had made sufficiently clear the type of Man and the nature of the social order they were aiming at and working for. After about two hundred years of ground work, the time had now come when the followers of the Faith had to assume the responsibility for which they were being groomed¹ and also to accept the norms and discipline within which they would have to work. The fear of God, purity of thought and deeds and an irrevocable and an all-time commitment to uphold social Justice and combat evil and aggression had to be the destiny of these sovereign people. They had to pledge their life and their soul to these Ideals at the time of their initiation into the fraternity of the Khalsa—the Saint Soldiers, a new and a unique conception of truly religious and socially awakened persons.

The Hindu orthodoxy, as represented by the petty princes of the hills, notwithstanding its humiliating plight, for centuries, at the hands of an alien socio-political order, continued to be adamant in its refusal to break the shell of its so-called divinely ordained superiority and admit within its ranks the forces of progress and enlightenment, resulting in an hopelessly static and inert social order, spiritually starved and morally sick. The Muslim reactionaries and the revivalists, on the other hand, under Aurangzeb, had succeeded in changing the complexion of the State which had been turned into a ruthless

engine of aggression for obliterating everything that did not fit into its design of a Uni-central socio-religious cum political order.²

These forces of orthodoxy and reaction were bound to come into conflict with the Sikh Ideals of Spiritual sovereignty and Social Justice. Such a conflict was at the root of the circumstances that led to the martyrdoms of Guru Arjan Dev (1606 A.D.) and Guru Tegh Bahadur (1675 A.D.). The same forces were once again bent upon precipitating the same sort of confrontation which, now was going to be total and decisive. During the last few years the Sikhs had unambiguously demonstrated their firm resolve to resist all those elements which sought to impinge upon the integrity of their Faith.

By the end of the seventeenth century, Guru Gobind Singh had come to the conclusion that the stage for a final call for 'DHARAMYUD', the struggle for righteousness, has been reached. After purging his ranks of all the corrupt elements, he summoned his followers for a grand gathering at Anandpur on 30th March 1699 A.D., the Baisakhi eve. On that historic day, Guru Gobind Singh, dressed in full armour and with a naked sword in his hand, stepped onto the rostrum and addressing an eighty thousand strong congregation said in a voice charged with rare emotions, "All of you profess deep love for your Faith and highest regards for your Guru. Breathes there a soul, amongst you, who is willing to offer his head for the sake of his Dharama? My sword is thirsting for it." The whole assembly was stunned and stupefied at this strange and unheard-of call. There was a rather protracted pause and the Guru repeated the call. Dya Ram of Lahore, a Khatri by caste, now advanced towards the rostrum and with folded hands bowing before the Guru said, "My head, my Master, is at thy feet; I shall be blessed if it is accepted as a humble offering to my Guru." The Guru led him into a tent pitched at a distance, and a shortwhile thereafter, came back to the assembly with the sword now dripping blood, at the sight of which, many amongst the gathering preferred to slip away. The Guru repeated the call for another head. Now

Dharam Das, a Jat from Delhi, answered the call and he too was led to the same tent. When the Guru came out, his mood and his sword were all the more awe inspiring. Thrice more he repeated the same call which, in turn, was answered by Mukhan Chand a washerman from Dwarka, Sahib Chand, a barber of Bidar and Himat Chand, a water-carrier of Jagan Nath. They also were, in turn, led into the aforesaid enclosure. The people left in the congregation were almost holding their breath in anticipation of what may follow next. When they saw the Guru walking out of the tent followed by the five individuals who had offered their lives at his call, they were wonderstruck. Guru Gobind Singh, pointing out to those brave souls described them as his 'BELOVED FIVE'—'PANJ PIARAS', who would form the nucleus of a new Order, the Order of the Khalsa. Standing close behind, five Beloved Ones immaculately attired in blue and saffron, with angelic transference on their faces, left no doubt in the mind of the people that they had attained the highest spiritual elevation. The Guru was proud of them and baptised them with the double edge sword.⁴ When, after the ceremony, Guru Gobind Singh requested them to baptise him likewise,⁵ they, nay the whole assembly, was taken aback. The Guru set their doubts at rest by declaring that he had merged his very soul in them, the Khalsa, and that, henceforth, there would be no difference between him and the Khalsa. "Khalsa Mero Roop Hai Khas"—'the Khalsa represents my very special form, he said. The Guru was baptised and initiated into the order of the Khalsa at the hands of his disciples. This is a unique example in the entire history of mankind, more especially in its spiritual annals. Bhai Nand Lal, a devotee, was so deeply touched by the Guru's seemingly strange and novel innovation that he could not contain his sentiments which he embodied in the song

Hail ! Hail !! Guru Gobind Singh

Who is a Guru and a disciple at the same time.

It would be pertinent to make, here, a special mention of the fact that three, out of the 'Beloved Five' belonged to the

so-called lower castes whose shadows even were shunned by the higher caste Hindus. Before them, the Prophet of a Socio-spiritual order stood, with folded hand, to be baptised by them. By owning them and elevating them, the Guru invested them with dignity which they could never even think of, as members of the Hindu social order. Those who now talk of ameliorating the lot of these people, euphemistically called Harijans, have much to learn from the precepts and preachings of Guru Gobind Singh.

After the baptismal ceremonies, Guru Gobind Singh, as recorded by an official newswriter present there, addressed the congregation in these words ;

“I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, rising above all differences of the religion as now practised. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different dharmas laid down for them in the Sastras, containing institutes of ‘Varnashramdharma’ abandon them altogether and adopting the way of mutual help and co-operation, mix freely with one another. Do not follow old Scriptures. Let none pay homage to the Ganges and, other places of pilgrimage which are considered holy in the Hindu religion, or worship the Hindu deities such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga etc ; but all should cherish faith in the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors. Let men of the four castes receive my Baptism of the Double-edged sword, eat out of the same vessel, and feel no aloofness from, or contempt for one another.”⁶

The news writer further says that about twenty thousand persons affirmed their faith in the Guru and were baptised on the first day, and in the next about two weeks the number rose to eighty thousands.⁷

The first ordinance which the Guru issued to the Sikh ‘Sangats’ throughout India, after the establishment of Khalsa, said inter alia :

“In future the Sikhs should come into my presence

wearing long hair. Once a Sikh is baptised, he should never shave. He should not use tobacco and other intoxicants and the Sikhs should henceforth, receive the baptism of the Double-edged Sword.”⁸

In order to ensure that the Khalsa Brotherhood did not degenerate into a sect of savage warriors, Guru Gobind Singh enjoined a very strict code of moral conduct upon its members. In the ‘Teti Swayyas’, he elucidates the conception of the character of the Khalsa in these words :

*Inspired by devotion
And awake to the light,
Singing perpetually
The Name of the Lord,
Having no faith in any.
Except the One Lord,
Absorbed in His splendour,
Absorbed in his Love,
Even amid error
Never believing
In fasts and tombs,
Temples and idols,
Or in anything but
Devotion to the One ;
Caring not even for
Compassion or charity
If God's life
Be not in them ;
Not for penances,
Not for bathings
In the holy places.
Not for the yogi's
Self-Macerations ;
Such a child of Light,
Such a paragon,
Such a complete man,
Fully enlightened
In heart and soul
To be of the Khalsa
Is worthy deemed !⁹*

The Order of the Khalsa is, therefore, a global fraternity of equal and God-fearing members who are morally awakened, socially committed and wedded to the Ideals of Freedom and Justice, which, at times, may have to be attained and defended by the use of force. According to Dr. E.A. Battoncourt "The Khalsa is a Superman saturated with the glories and powers of the infinite, yet exuberant with sweetness, innocence and brotherliness."

It needs to be emphasised here that the establishment of the Order of Khalsa was not an abrupt development, under Guru Gobind Singh. It was rather a logical culmination of the basic tenets of the Faith, as enunciated by its founder Guru Nanak and as endorsed and enlarged by his successors. 'By instituting the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh reaffirmed the Faith promulgated by Guru Nanak, consolidated the Sikh Panth to withstand the external interference, inspired his Sikhs to defend the claims of conscience at the risk of their lives and enabled them to stand on their own feet as a corporate body. In this process he sharpened the distinct socio-religious character of the Sikh-Panth.¹⁰

The institution of the Order of Khalsa is a landmark in the history of India with implications stretching far beyond its borders. It brought about a complete metamorphism in the attitude of its disciples towards the forces of Establishment. No longer were they inclined to attribute their socio-spiritual handicaps and their plight, as a result thereof, to the vagaries of 'Fate' or the inexorable laws of 'Karma'. They had been enabled to formulate for the human beings an order of basic rights which, under no circumstances, they would allow anyone to erode. The price involved in the efforts to defend these inviolable rights could not deter them, because, at the time of their initiation into the Order of the Khalsa, they had been required to pledge their very lives for such a cause. Delineating the wider significance of the institution of Khalsa, Dr. Gupta is of the opinion ;

1. It created an inalienable spirit of brotherhood and comradeship among the Sikhs.

2. Each one of the Sikhs was equal in status and had the same rights and privileges. Thus 100 years before the French Revolution, principles of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality were enunciated and became the bedrock of the Khalsa life.
3. By his selection, on merit, of the five representative leaders, the Guru destroyed the theory of divine rights of kings and established the supremacy of the common man.
4. The doctrine of collective responsibility was proclaimed. The five beloved ones—in the presence of the Holy Granth—were to be obeyed by the entire community.¹¹

CHAPTER IV

ESCALATION OF CONFLICT

The added emphasis on the obliteration of all distinctions of castes and creeds, through the institution of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh, was looked upon, by the orthodox hill chiefs, as a challenge to their social and political status and a potential danger to their hegemony¹. The increasing number of Sikh immigrants to Anandpur added further to their apprehensions. They now planned to wrought destruction on the Guru and all that he stood for, by all means at their disposal².

One day, when the Guru was out hunting in the Doon valley, two wily hill chiefs, Balia Chand and Alam Chand, tried to ambush him with the help of a large detachment of troops with them. The small band of the Sikhs with the Guru met the challenge in a brave and befitting manner and compelled the treacherous hill men to flee for their lives in complete disarray.

Finding themselves helpless to face the Sikhs on their own, the Hindu Rajas sought the help of the Mughals³ which was granted by Aurangzeb⁴ who, too, was equally anxious to break the power of the Guru. However, he made it clear that the entire costs of the military expeditions would be borne by the hill lords, to which they readily agreed. Accordingly two Mughal generals, Painde Khan and Dina Beg, were commissioned for the purpose with a ten thousand strong force at their disposal. They were joined at Ropar by the Hindu rulers with their contingents. When the Guru received intelligence of the

huge army advancing towards Anandpur, he decided to take the field personally alongwith his followers. In the thick of the battle, the Guru accepted the challenge of Painde Khan to fight in a single combat and settle the issue. In the hand to hand fight, Painde Khan was killed and afterwards Dina Beg was also injured. The enemy forces took to flight pursued by the Sikhs as far as Ropar whence they were recalled by the Guru.

Totally blinded by their injured pride as a result of repeated reverses in the field and also by narrow caste prejudices, the haughty hill chieftains were unable to see the writings on the wall. They could not countenance the idea of accepting, on equal terms, the followers of Guru Gobind Singh, most of whom had hitherto belonged to lower strata of society. They had hardly been able to lick their wounds suffered in the last war, when, once again, they were on the war path. All the twenty two hill states decided to wage another attack on Anandpur. They also mustered the support of the Gujjars and Rangars under their leader, Jagat Ullah. The whole effort resulted, once again, in the total defeat of the allies. Jagat Ullah, Kesari Chand of Jaswal and Raja Ghumand Chand were among those who lay dead on the field. Ajit Singh, the Guru's sixteen year old son, Bachittar Singh and Udai Singh earned laurels in the battle for their prodigious feats of valour.

Having got despaired of capturing Anandpur by force, the Hindu Rajas hit upon a treacherous strategy to have the town of Anandpur evacuated. According to Saina Pat, they appealed to the Guru's sense of chivalry by requesting him to leave Anandpur to them as the 'Gao-Bhat' i.e. the food for the sacred cow.⁵ They solemnly promised to let him live in peace, on his return to the place, after sometimes. Even fully aware of the motives behind this move, the Guru, nonetheless, in order to expose them, decided to accept the request, and came out of Anandpur to encamp at NIRMOH. In collaboration with Wazir Khan, the Faujdar of Sirhind, the hill chiefs, in utter disregard of their solemn words, attacked the Sikh camps. Notwithstanding the comparative strength of the enemy being,

according to Saina Pat, 'Like stars surrounding the Moon', the Sikhs, under their Guru, successfully fought through the enemy ranks to enter the friendly state of Basoli. The Kehlur troops sent in pursuit met with such resistance at the hands of the Sikhs that they had to flee from the field 'as the arrow from a stretched bow'.

Sometimes afterwards, when the Ranghars of Kamlot assaulted the Sikh travellers, the Guru chastised them by capturing the fortress of Kamlot and all attempts on the part of the Ranghars to retrieve it ended in complete failure.

The fall of Kamlot and the return of the Guru to Anandpur, thereafter, impressed upon the chief of Kehlur the necessity of coming to an amicable settlement with him. By the middle of 1702 A.D., some such understanding seems to have been reached between the two.

The Guru was now left in peace for sometimes which according to Saina Pat, lasted for about two years. During this period, Guru Gobind Singh strengthened the arrangements for the defence of Anandpur, had increasing number of Sikhs trained in the use of arms and, above all, concentrated on disseminating the spiritual message of the House of Guru Nanak. The comparative peace also prompted increasing number of Sikhs to repair to Anandpur, the seat of their 'Sacha Padshah—the 'True King', in matters spiritual as well as temporal. Many of them opted to settle at Anandpur, nearer their beloved Guru.

The increasing influence of the Guru among the people, alarmed the hill chiefs to form a coalition against him, once again. They sent him an ultimatum to leave the hills. On refusal of the Sikhs to entertain such a demand, the allied forces of the hill states decided to lay seige to the town of Anandpur. The Khalsa horsemen coming out in sorties, inflicted such bloody loses upon the enemies that they were obliged to retreat. Yet another attempt by the Raja of Kehlur ended in greater fiasco.

Fully convinced that they were unable to deal with the

Guru on their own, the Hindu Principalities, through Bhim Chand, pleaded with Aurangzeb⁶ to help them eliminate, according to them, a potential danger to his empire. Aurangzeb who, for some times last, had been receiving exaggerated reports of the mounting power of the Guru, from a distance, was finally prevailed upon to issue orders to the governors of Lahore and Sirhind to assist the Hindu princes, with men and material, in their conflict with Guru Gobind Singh.⁷ The crafty Hindu Princes thus succeeded in transforming a basically local conflict into a major war between the young Khalsa, with its very limited resources on the one side, and the Mughal empire with its vast and unlimited resources, on the other.

The ranks of this formidable combination of the allied troops were further augmented by the addition of Gujjars, Ranghars and other such mercenaries. The contemporary records place the total strength of the invading army at about a million, including contingents from Lahore, Sirhind, Qasur, Maler Kotla, Multan, Bijwara, and other districts. The Hill Chiefs, Zabardast Khan of Lahore and Wazir Khan of Sirhind, who led the allied troops, were in a very confident mood and hoped that they would be able to vanquish the Khalsa rather easily on the strength of their far superior numbers and better equipment, by storming Anandpur. However, they were completely dismayed, when their first attempt proved abortive and very costly. At the end of the day, as many as nine hundreds of the enemy troops lay dead on the field and the Sikh snipers forced them to take refuge at a safe distance. Wazir Khan was in rage. Next morning he ordered another assault, but, by the night fall, the Mughals and the Rajputs were forced back to their entrenchments, after conceding a heavier toll of their ranks. Wazir Khan and his co-generals were forced to realize that the body of the devoted Khalsa, fighting for a just and honourable cause, was more than a match to the hordes of mercenaries and casual troops come together for no other purpose than to feed themselves on the loot and plunder, in the event of a victory in the war. He now counselled a tight blockade of Anandpur, stopping all ingress

and egress, with a view to starve the Sikhs to submission. The Khalsa outwitted the enemy manoeuvres by plundering the enemy stores, under cover of darkness and returning to Anandpur laden with booty. Wazir Khan moved the stores to safer places and placed them under a round-the-clock vigil.

The siege dragged on for more than six months and yet there was no sign of capitulation from Anandpur. However, with the passage of more time, and the tightening of blockade, the stock of food with the Sikhs got completely exhausted and they were forced to subsist on wild bushes and the leaves and the bark of the trees. Their horses and live stock also starved to death. Obviously the Sikhs were being driven to desperate straits.⁶ When, later on, the course of the stream which supplied them water, was also diverted by the enemy, there were visible dents in their spirits. Extreme privations gave birth to discontentment. Many of them now began to think in terms of the desirability of evacuating the place.

Discontentment, however, was also mounting in the enemy ranks as well. The onset of winter and the non-availability of supplies from the barren and inhospitable surrounding areas, led to ever increasing desertions, especially when there were little signs of an end to the hostilities in any near future. The leaders of the enemy troops now hit upon an underhand stratagem to save their faces from an utter defeat. According to the unimpeachable contemporary evidence, the enemy held out solemn assurances to the Guru and his [Khalsa that they would be provided absolutely safe conduct if they, for the sake of peace, agreed to evacuate the town of Anandpur for some time. References in the Fatehnama and Zafarnama very clearly indicate that this move was approved and blessed by Aurangzeb himself. Bhai Santokh Singh also supports this view in 'Gurpartap Suraj Granth'.

'A letter from the Rajas of Kehlur and the other states was received. The Guru took that letter in hand. Then he sent for Aurangzeb's letter. Having put both of them carefully in his pocket, he ordered

every one to get ready and move out on the road'. Sarup Singh Kaushik also vouchsafes, in 'Guru K'an Sakhian' the receipt of solemn words on Quran from Aurangzeb, by the Guru, before he decided to evacuate Anandpur.⁹

The possibility of the safe conduct further encouraged those who were inclined to desert the town. The Guru had no doubt that the offer of the enemy was a death trap, and he had also the tidings about the ever increasing discontentment in the enemy ranks. Under these circumstances, he advised his followers to hold out for sometime more. But he told those who were still inclined to desert that they could do so at their own risk, after signing a renunciation deed. The extreme privations of labouring under conditions of hunger and starvation drove some of them to choose this course. When sometimes later, still more clamoured to evacuate the Town, Guru Gobind Singh, much against his own superior judgement, finally made up his mind to accept their demand. On the fateful night of December 21st, 1704, the Guru ordered the evacuation of Anandpur, after paying homage to his father's shrine.

Besides the members of his family, about 1500 persons were accompanying the Guru when he left Anandpur. The night being cold, dark and rainy, helped the departing Sikhs to get safely out of the enemy cordon. However, as anticipated by the Guru, the moment the enemy learnt about the departure of the Sikhs, in total disregard of its own solemn words and hence of any ethical standards, it set out in hot pursuit immediately. The treacherous conduct of the enemy is referred to, by the Guru, in Zafarnama, wherein he says,

*"Trampling over their own solemn words,
Armed with Arrows, Spears and Swords,
Thy men in blatant betrayal of trust,
Made, on us, a sudden thrust."*

Wazir Khan's men soon fell upon the Guru's rear guard. Udai Singh,¹⁰ together with a small band of the Sikhs, decided to halt the progress of the fast closing in army, so as to enable

the Guru's entourage to cross SIRSA, a rivulet, most unfortunately, then in high spate, due to winter rains. Though the Guru, the members of his family and a small band of the Sikhs were able to cross the flooded river, yet they got scattered in the attempt, losing some of their comrades in the midstream. While the holy wives of the Guru were escorted to Delhi by some of the devoted Sikhs, the holy mother, Gujri, alongwith her two younger grandsons, was led to village Saheri by one of her own household employee—Gangoo Brahmin—who, however, soon after betrayed them to the Nawab of Sirhind, the sworn enemy of the Sikhs. Amid protestations from some saner elements, like the Nawab of Malerkotla, Wazir Khan had the tender sons of the Guru, then aged only seven and nine years, bricked up alive, having been stung by the boldness of their manners and the courage of their convictions. Their aged grandmother could not withstand the news of the heart rending tragedy and left for her heavenly abode immediately thereafter.

Guru Gobind Singh himself, alongwith two of his elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, aged eighteen and fourteen years respectively, and just forty of his brave devotees, being relentlessly persued by the enemy contingents, reinforced at Ropar, decided to take shelter in a mud-walled house at Chamkaur, which was almost immediately thereafter besieged by the enemy numbering about a million. These facts have been borne out by the Guru himself in his Fatehnama, when addressing Aurangzeb, he says,

*"When a million strong horde,
All armed and blood thirsty,
Falleth suddenly upon,
A batch of mere forty,
Hungry all and tired,
Though brave and inspired,
The odds are all too grave,
For gods even to brave.*

The enemy had hoped to liquidate the all too small band of the starved, fatigued and the battle-worn Sikhs, not so well:

entrenched, rather easily and with that end in view, it launched a fierce attack on the improvised fortress at Chamkaur. However, the rain of bullets and the arrows from within the ramparts was so furious and so effective that the invading hordes had to fall reeling back and did not dare to venture near them. The determined batch of the Sikhs, endowed with super human courage, remained firmly entrenched in their positions, to the great wonder even of the enemy. When the ammunition got exhausted, in order to keep the enemy at a bay, three to five Sikhs, armed with only a sword, a shield or a spear would emerge from within the fortress and with the war cry of 'Sat Sri Akal' on their lips would fall upon the enemy ranks. Death for them was all too certain, but their object was to keep the enemy engaged for as long as it was possible and in this aim they succeeded admirably. Two of the Guru's elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, also fell in the field similarly but only after excelling their comrades-in-arms in every way. In the face of such feats of rare courage and unrivalled valour, the bravest among the enemy were feeling stunned and helpless and could not dare to venture near the mud fortress garrisoned by less than two scores of ill-equipped and ill-fed persons. That such a small batch of the Sikhs, almost half starved, with only courage, born out of the presence of their Guru amongst them, to sustain them, should have been able to withstand successfully the onslaughts of a million strong host of enemy, for the whole length of the day, stands out, in the entire history of mankind, as a unique and proud monument to the invincible spirit of Man devoted to the cause of Truth and Justice. "For sheer valour and endurance, the battle has scarcely any parallel", says Dr. I. B. Banerjee.¹¹

When at the end of the day, besides himself, only five Sikhs were left with him, Guru Gobind Singh made known to them, his resolve to personally take the field next morning. The Sikhs earnestly pleaded with him to leave the place under cover of darkness, because, according to them, he alone would be able to give a new lease of life to the scattered ranks of the Khalsa.

The Guru, however, was adamant and refused to leave them alone. The Sikhs were determined to make a bid to save the life of the Guru, their 'Beau-Ideal.' Recalling that the Guru had vested a unanimous decision of the five members of the Khalsa with the solemnity of an injunction binding on the Guru as well, they formally resolved to ask the Guru to leave the place. Guru Gobind Singh, now, was left with no choice and bowing before their decision, left the place, with three of his disciples, 'without even a hair of his body being injured'. In this he saw the hand of God.

*"Chastiser of foes of evil designs,
Who, in folly, forget the Sublime ;
He led me safely off their cordon.
Without a scratch on my person."*

—Zafarnama

Next morning, the enemy on taking control of the all but abandoned fortress, was sorely disappointed to find that Guru Gobind Singh was not there.¹² By that time, he and his companions—Dya Singh, Dharam Singh and Man Singh—had been able to cover good distance, under cover of darkness. Armed units of the enemy troops were sent in search of him and with an eagle's eye they were trying to locate him.

Meanwhile reaching Machhiwara, the Guru's party chanced to meet Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan,¹³ the Pathan brothers who, as horse traders, had met the Guru earlier at Anandpur and had developed a deep devotion for him, for his piety and lofty teachings. They were determined to help him get out of the enemy trap to a place of comparative safety. They devised to disguise him as a contemporary muslim saint of great veneration and seating him on a palanquin lifted it on their shoulders. The device helped the Guru and his companions to pass through Chulal, Lall Kalan, Kubha, Katana, Rampur, Kanech, Sahnewal, Nandpur Tibba etc., rather unobtrusively, and reach Alamgir, where one of his old devotees met the Guru and presented him a horse. Accepting the horse, Guru Gobind Singh now relieved the Pathan brothers, thanked

them heartily and invested them with tokens of everlasting bonds between them and the Khalsa.¹⁴

From Alamgir onward the journey lay through the villages of Jodh-Rattan, Mohi, Heran, Rajoana, Kamalpur, Seeloani, and Rai Kot, the headquarters of Rai Kalla,¹⁵ an old devotee of Guru Gobind Singh. A special messenger, Nura Mahi, sent to Sirhid from this place, brought the heart rending news of the Martyrdom of the two younger princes and their aged grandmother. The Guru received the tragic news with amazing courage and perfect equanimity. Pulling out a wild shrub with the tip of one of his arrows, the Guru is reported to have predicted, at this place, that such a tyrannous rule of the Mughals is bound to come to an end in the very near future.¹⁶

After a brief stay at Rai Kot, Guru Gobind Singh decided to proceed further, towards the waste lands of Bhatinda. Passing through the villages of Manuke, Mehdiana, Chakkar, Takhtoopura, and Madeh, the Guru reached Dina where he was received by Chaudharies Lakhmir and Shamir, the grandsons of Chaudhari Jodh, a spirited follower of Guru Har Gobind, the 'Grandfather of Guru Gobind Singh.

The people of the surrounding areas, the Brars, were mostly committed to the cause of the Faith and the Guru decided to stay at Dina, in their midst, for the time being. He moved about quite freely to preach his divine mission and as the information about his whereabouts reached the Sikhs, they started coming to Dina to pay him their homage.

The comparative respite at Dina enabled Guru Gobind Singh to compose 'Zafarnama', in reply to a communication from Aurangzeb, possibly received there through a special messenger from the King.¹⁷ In this composition, couched in chaste and vigorous Persian verse, Aurangzeb has been severely indicted for his treacherous character, cowardly conduct, tyrannous rule and misconceived religious fanaticism. He is warned that unless he made suitable amends a very sad end awaited him in the worlds, here and hereafter. This 'Epistle of Victory' is a testimony to the invincible spirit of Guru Gobind

Singh, who squarely reminds the King that notwithstanding the losses inflicted upon him, through cunning and immoral means, he and his Khalsa remained unsubdued and were in a position to inflict suitable punishment upon him for his continued misdeeds. He is advised to abjure violence and tyranny or, if he had the heart, take the field personally and face his nemesis.

When Wazir Khan learnt about the presence of Guru Gobind Singh at Dina he asked Chaudharies Lakhmir and Shamir to hand over the Sikh Pontiff to him. The Brar brothers firmly refused to oblige him and reiterated their resolve to stand by the Guru through thick and thin. There could now be no doubt that the Faujdar of Sirhind was looking forward to another expedition against the Guru who, true to his mission, was determined to resist any renewed aggression that threatened the integrity of his Faith. He, therefore, asked his followers to gather in strength, fully armed, and in full faith. After a hurried survey of the area to find out the most suitable place where the enemy could be engaged, the Guru finally fixed his mind on Kot Kapura. The master of the place Chaudhari Kapura, who professed great admiration for the Guru, however, got alarmed at the prospects of possible reprisals at the hands of the Mughals and, therefore, politely declined to hand over his place to the Sikhs. Instead, he suggested Khidrana, a relatively inaccessible place which housed a small water reservoir, the only one in the entire arid area around. The Guru proceeded thither.

During the course of the journey from Dina, a sizable body of the Sikhs got gathered around the Guru whose immense personal sufferings and sacrifices had earned for him deeper devotion and dedication from his ranks. The Sikhs were now all the more determined to uphold the sanctity of their Faith and to sacrifice themselves for their Guru and all he stood for.

Some of the Sikhs of the Majha tract in Punjab, during the protracted siege of Anandpur, had deserted their Guru and their brother-in-arms, under the acute pain of prolonged

sufferings and starvation. On reaching home, they were put to such a shame by their womenfolk for their cowardly and un-Sikh conduct that they were obliged to realize their mistake. They now resolved to wash off the stigma of apostasy from their faces, even with their lives, if need be.

Having learnt about the renewed danger to the security of their Guru and the integrity of the Khalsa, they decided to rejoin their brothers-in-Faith. By the time the Mughal army caught up with the rear guards of the Sikh contingents, near Khidrana, these brave and repentant Sikhs, under the command of a Lady of unusual courage and conviction, Mai Bhago, had also reached there. In the course of the bitter fight that ensued, they fell to the last man, but not before they had so completely routed the enemy that, thereafter, it did not dare to molest the Guru.¹⁸ The Guru was so much moved by their renewed devotion and supreme sacrifice that, forgiving their earlier desertion, he not only owned them all, completely and wholeheartedly, but also blessed them as having been divinely redeemed. The holy shrine of 'Muktsar' commemorates the sacred memory of these brave souls.

The battle over, Guru Gobind Singh visited many places for missionary work. Passing through several villages, he finally reached the vicinity of Talwandi Sabo on 20th January, 1706, and, at the request of the village landlord, Chaudhari Dalla—one of his old followers, he decided to put up there for the time being. Talwandi Sabo, thereafter known as Damdama Sahib, very soon began to pulsate with the renewed socio-spiritual activities of the Khalsa under Guru Gobind Singh and became reminiscent of the glory of Anandpur. More and more devotees would now repair to this place to seek solace at the feet of the Guru who, for them, had courted tremendous personal sufferings and sacrifices. The Guru's wives also joined him there from Delhi. When the holy mothers burst into tears recalling the cruel and unbearable deaths of the four young Princes, the Guru tried to console them. Pointing towards the Sikhs congregated around, he

said, "What does it matter if the four have died? They died so that these thousands might live."

The period of Guru Gobind Singh's stay at Talwandi Sabo, lasting for about nine months and nine days, is remarkable for two things in particular. The first is the marvellous impact of the Guru's charismatic personality and teachings on the people. The Guru conducted occasional tours throughout length and breadth of the area to spread the Gospel of Sikhism. As a result, a large number of people accepted the sacrament of the steel, the Amrit, and entered the folds of the Faith.¹⁹ Talwandi Sabo attracted large crowds of devotees and presented the spectacle of a new Anandpur. More than ten times the number of people at Anandpur came to assemble here. According to Koer Singh :

*"Every day the Guru distributed gold and silver coins,
Countless soldiers were thus attracted to the place."*

(Gurbilas Patshahi—10)

The preparation of the final recension of the holy Adi Granth is the second great achievement of Damdama Sahib. The final copy of the Holy Granth was prepared by Bhai Mani Singh under the guidance of the Guru himself. The same recension was later invested with Guruship at Naded (Deccan), on October 6, 1708 A.D.

Meanwhile, an Imperial envoy delivered another message from Aurangzeb to the Guru, expressing desire for a personal meeting between the two. To facilitate such a meeting, the Emperor issued orders to Munim Khan of Lahore 'to conciliate Guru Gobind Singh and make satisfactory arrangements for his travel towards the south'.²⁰

According to the Sikh chronicles, the change of heart on the part of Aurangzeb was the result of the deep impact that the letters of the Guru—Fatehnama and Zafarnama—had on the mind of the aging King. His bloody and sinful acts, brought out to him in bold relief in these letters, appear to have driven the Emperor to a state of acute inner torment and a mood of repentance. It is apparently in such a mood

that he wrote a letter to one of his sons, saying,

"I know not who I am, where shall I go and what will happen to this sinner. My years have gone by profitlessly. God has been in my heart but my darkened eyes have not recognized His light. There is no hope for me in the future.....I have greatly sinned and know not what torments await me."²¹

Against earnest entreaties from most of his followers, the Guru left Talwandi Sabo, on 30th October, 1706, for the South, ostensibly to meet Aurangzeb to impress upon him the folly and futility of his wrong and unethical approach towards his subjects, especially the non-muslims. He also looked forward to the opportunity to settle all the outstanding issues with him, peacefully, if possible. The question of exposing the excesses and misdeeds of his porteges like Wazir Khan must not also have been far from his mind.²²

Guru Gobind Singh, however, did not follow the arrangements and the route suggested by the King. Accompanied by a sizable contingent of the devoted Khalsa, he entered Rajasthan via Sirsa. Near Eaghaur in Rajasthan, he learnt about the death of Aurangzeb on Feb. 20th, 1707 and, along-with the Sikhs accompanying him, he decided to proceed towards Delhi.

War of Succession

In the house of the Mughals, the law of primogeniture was never followed and, hence, every aspirant to the throne had to assert his claim through sword. The death of Aurangzeb was, therefore, a signal for the war of succession between his sons, Mohd. Muazzam and Azam Shah, in which Mohd. Muazzam—later crowned as Bahadur Shah—came out successful. At the request of Bahadur Shah, on the eve of the crucial battle, Guru Gobind Singh had extended him moral and material support, although the historians differ with regard to the quantum and the impact of such an help. However, the cordiality with which Guru Gobind Singh was later received in the Imperial court at Agra by Bahadur Shah, after wearing

the Crown, and the honours then conferred upon him—as vouchsafed by the Guru himself in his 'Hukamnama'²³ issued after the event—do unmistakably indicate that the Mughal King must have been very much impressed by the help rendered to him by the Guru. An entry in the *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Maulla* (Jaipur), dated 24th July, 1707, also speaks of the Guru having been allowed to go fully armed in the Emperor's presence and the costly presents then bestowed upon him.²⁴

The circumstances that brought Guru Gobind Singh and Bahadur Shah closer together enabled the Guru to discuss with him all the issues which were the legacy of the reign of his father, Aurangzeb. The object of Guru Gobind Singh's parleys with Bahadur Shah is indicated in a letter that he wrote after their meeting at Agra. In this letter, the Guru asks the Khalsa to come to his presence fully armed, on his return to Kehlur. Obviously the Guru must have been insisting upon the restoration of the *Status quo ante* and the retributive actions against those who were guilty of perpetrating inhuman excesses on the innocent people, particularly the Sikhs.²⁵

It appears that Bahadur Shah was finding it difficult to take any punitive action against persons like Wazir Khan or even the hill chiefs, at the initial stage of his career as a King, especially when, in his court, there was a strong lobby of the orthodox Muslim revivalists, with their base at Sirhind, who looked upon the rise of Sikhism as a challenge to the integrity of Islam.²⁶ He, therefore, asked Guru Gobind Singh to wait for sometime, till he consolidated his position. His gesture of goodwill towards the Guru may have been, therefore, a diplomatic move to ensure his presence near the court to keep it informed of his mind and moves.²⁷

In November 1707, Bahadur Shah marched against the Kachwahya Rajputs in Rajasthan to quell their revolt. Guru Gobind Singh travelled with the imperial camp but without participating in any of the campaigns. On several occasions the Guru would leave the Mughal camp and go to various places to preach his Gospel in his own way.²⁸

The operations against the Rajputs had to be dropped abruptly when the Emperor's brother, Kam Bakash, rose in revolt in Deccan. Bahadur Shah had to march down South to subdue him. The Guru also moved with him in the hope that the King would soon be free attend to his demands, as promised.

CHAPTER V

END OF THE JOURNEY

Marching through Rajputana the Imperial army crossed river Tapti at Burhanpur. Captivated by the facinating landscape, the Guru decided to encamp on the banks of the river for a few days. He rejoined the imperial camp, towards the end of September 1708, at Nanded, a small town on the banks of river Godawari. Even during these travels, the Guru did not change his daily routine. He was up well before sunrise, to say his morning prayers and to meditate. Prayer meetings were held later in the day, when he recited 'Gurbani' from the holy Granth and expounded its text to the assemblage, after which 'Kirtan' was sung and 'Karah Parsad' distributed. These meetings roused the interest of the local inhabitants who were welcome to attend them. The author of the 'Tarikh-i Bahadur Shahi' writes,

"Guru Gobind, one of the grandsons of Nanak, has come into these districts to travel and accompany the royal camp. He is in the habit of constantly addressing the assemblies of worldly people, religious fanatics and all sorts of people."

On reaching Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh met one Madho Dass, a Rajput ascetic, who lived on the bank of the river.¹ Born at Rajauri (Poonchh), in Kashmir, in 1670 A.D., he joined the order of 'Bairagis' and after spending many years in Hindu Monastries in south India, he set up his own hermitage at Nanded

After meeting the Guru, Madho Dass attended Sikh prayer meetings and had long discussions with him. Finally he became the Guru's disciple and described himself as his 'Banda'—a slave. The Guru baptised him by administering him 'Amrit' and accepting him in the order of the Khalsa, blessed him as 'Banda Singh Bahadur. There are some who say that he was renamed Gurbakash Singh after the initiation. However, according to Khafi Khan, even before he met the Guru, Banda was a Sikh by persuasion i.e. 'One of those attached to the tenets of Guru Gobind, and who from their birth or from the moment of their admission, never cut or shave either beard or whiskers or any hair whatever of the body.' That Banda Bahadur should have been chosen as the leader of the expedition to Punjab, in preference to the other battle worn Sikhs of proven abilities, lends some credibility to the theory of Khafi Khan.²

By now Guru Gobind Singh seems to have realized that Bahadur Shah was either not inclined to render justice or was not in a position to take any punitive action against the fanatical satraps like Wazir Khan, who were guilty of heinous crimes against the people. No redress would come by request, he was convinced. He, therefore, parted company with Bahadur Shah and stayed on at Nanded. Banda Bahadur was charged with the task of proceeding to Punjab with the definitive purpose of chastising Wazir Khan, hill chiefs and all those who were tyrannizing over the innocent people. Binod Singh, Kahan Singh and Baaz Singh were among those who were deputed with Banda Bahadur. Dr. G.C. Narang puts this figure at twenty five.³ Adequate reinforcements from Punjab were assured. Punishments matching their crimes were soon inflicted upon Wazir Khan, hill chiefs and indeed all those who had the blood of the innocent people on their hands, by the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur. Although Guru Gobind Singh had by now foresaken his Mortal frame, yet within three years of his death the whole of the central and south-eastern Punjab lay prostrate at the feet of the Sikhs who were now threatening Delhi as well. One can therefore very well imagine how far the Guru had

'roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty, though fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the true adjuncts, of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak.'⁴

After the departure of Banda Bahadur, the Guru stayed back at Nanded and continued preaching the message of the House of Guru Nanak. Increasing number of people would come daily to partake of this message. One evening two Pathans entered his camp and stayed on even after the conclusion of the prayer meeting. They had attended these meetings earlier as well and, as such, did not arouse any misgivings in the mind of any of the camp followers. As the Guru was retiring to his bed, one of these Pathans suddenly attacked the Guru with dagger causing grievous injury in his stomach. Before the assailant could escape the Guru struck him down. His accomplice, lurking around, was also seized by the Sikhs and slain. Both the Pathans having been killed on the spur of the moment their identities and their motives have been shrouded in mystery. However, in a vivid account of the tragic episode, Saina Pat says—and with very cogent reasons—that the Pathans were the hirelings of Wazir Khan who, because of his own dastardly deeds, was ever lying in fear of reprisals from the Guru whose apparently growing conciliation with the Emperor was making the Sirhind Faujdar all the more apprehensive.⁵

The wound caused on the body of the Guru was immediately tended⁶ and in a couple of days he resumed the task of addressing the religious assemblies. He appeared to be well on the way to complete recovery and there were great rejoicings among his followers.

However, after some days, when the Guru announced to his followers that he had been summoned to the divine presence, they were shocked and dismayed. There were many who cried and could not be consoled. Addressing them the Guru said, "The Khalsa must never lie in fear of death. It is inevitable and must be faced squarely and with grace, as the

will of God. We have accomplished our mission by awakening in you the love of God and the will to resist evil." To those who were still finding it difficult to accept the inevitable he said, "Do not grieve for us. We shall ever be with our Khalsa. Whenever and wherever five of its members, dedicated and pious, shall assemble, they shall feel our presence and whoever will be inclined to seek our guidance, he shall find it in the 'Word' as enshrined in the holy 'Granth'."

The Guru now asked for the sacred volume of the Adi Granth and as per Bhat Vahi Bhadson Parganah Thanesar :

"Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, grandson of Guru Hargobind, great-grandson of Guru Arjan, of the family of Guru Ram Das, of Surajbansi gosai clan, Sodhi Khatri, resident of Anandpur, in the area of Kehlur, now at Nander, on the bank of Gudavari in Deccan, asked Bhai Dya Singh, on wednesday, Katik Chauth, Shukla Pakkh, Samvat 1765 (Oct., 1708), to fetch Sri Granth Sahib. In compliance with orders, Dya Singh brought Sri Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five pice and a coconut and then bowed his head before it. He told the Sangat, 'I command that Sri Granthji should be acknowledged by all in my place. He who so acknowledges it will receive the divine grace. The Guru will come to his rescue. Accept this as the Truth."

The institution of the personal Guru was thus ended and now the divine 'Word', enshrined in the holy Adi Granth by the Gurus themselves, was installed as the Guru in perpetuity.⁷ The abolition of the personal Guruship was a very significant development in the history of the Sikhs. Through such a step, Guru Gobind Singh had reposed an abiding confidence in the collective leadership of the Community, committed, in perpetuity, under the guidance of the holy Word. That the Sikhs proved themselves worthy of such a confidence is fully borne out by the manner in which they conducted themselves as and when there was a danger to the integrity of their Faith.

It was now past midnight. Guru Gobind Singh attired himself in the usual royal fashion, with the jewelled aigrette and his arms donning his person and the white hawk perched on his left hand. He called for his dark blue steed, bid a spirited farewell to his disciples with the salutation, 'Waheguru ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh'

'The Khalsa belongs to God

Victory be to God !

and rode into the enclosure containing his cremation pyre. A watch before sunrise on October 7th, 1708 he gave up his spirit at the young age of just forty two years. An age had come to an end.

"That man who is from God sent forth
Doth yet again to God return !"

—Wordsworth.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

A fuller appreciation of the life and the work of Guru Gobind Singh is possible only in the context of the wider Sikh Ideals, as enunciated in the holy Granths and the other texts by the Sikh Pontiffs and the Sikh Saints, as also by taking into account the times in which these Ideals were conceived and brought home to the people. The scope of the present volume is too limited to be able to dilate upon the subject at any length and in any depth. And yet it is imperative for our purpose to make more than a passing reference to these issues.

The age in which Guru Nanak (and His successors) happened to live has been described by Guru Nanak himself as 'An age like a knife.....held at the throat of the people.....by the King and the Clergy, the butchers of humanity.'¹ The people owed their very lives and the pettiest of their liberties to the absolute mercy and the idiosyncracies of those who happened to rule over them. Even in their wildest dreams, the poor people did not have any idea of any right being fundamental to their existence—including the right to life, and hence inviolable. For centuries on end, they were living in abject terror of the rulers and those who were supposed to lend them courage and hope by ministering to their Spiritual needs had allowed themselves to become tools in the hands of the State sans any heart or any soul. Religion had been turned into an engine for social fraud and exploitation by bending the individual's volition to

the moral and political coxcombries of the perfidious priest.²

It was in an age of such ignorance and such injustice that Guru Nanak, the Founder of Sikh Faith, under the Divine commandment³ and with a Divine mission, appeared on the scene 'to extricate the suffering humanity from the fires' (of ignorance and oppression) in which it was being consumed. "He peeled veil after veil of the masks that the 'butchers of humanity', the king and clergy, had put on their faces and exposed them, to the public gaze, in their true colours. He told the people that these butchers of humanity, by shedding their human qualities and by behaving like 'tigers' and 'dogs' have forfeited all claims to their allegiance and as such the people have the right to repudiate these authorities which, according to Guru Nanak, had no divine sanction whatsoever.⁵ The claims of both the secular as well as spiritual authorities to their allegiance, the Guru told the people, rests proportionately on their commitment to the ideals of Justice and Equality. The ultimate sovereignty vests with the people, who must exercise their judgement with care and with a sense of discrimination 'He alone is entitled to sit on the throne who is fit to rule'⁶ and 'deeds and not creed would determine the social and spiritual status of an individual',⁷ declared the Guru. The poor and the innocent people who, for centuries, had been nurtured in the belief that their social and political plight had been predestined, were amazed to hear such sermons from the mouth of a Messiah who was so different, so unorthodox, so unassuming and so full of hope and aspirations for them. Through the mist of miseries they could now see a bright light' that illumined their souls. Slowly, though surely, they began to be attracted towards it. Guru Nanak was aware of the fact that those who had been enjoying the fruits of their ill-gotten privileges would fight to the bitter end to retain their hold on them. As such, he warned those who were inclined 'to follow his Path to come with their heads on their palms.' Only the courageous could step onto his Path.

To instill courage and Faith in the minds of the people

they had to be spiritually elevated and morally awakened, by communicating with them in the language they understood and by holding aloft before them the virtues of courage and sacrifice for the cause of Faith, through unimpeachable and unrivalled personal precepts. The undaunted courage of the Sikh Pontiffs, as embodied in the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (1606 A.D.), Guru Tegh Bahadur (1675 A.D.) and the assumption of armed postures against the tyrants by Guru Hargobind and later by Guru Gobind Singh, involving unparalleled personal sufferings and sacrifices, gave the people the direction they could long be looking for.

Increasing number of people were attracted to the Faith, assiduously nurtured by the Sikh Prophets. A new generation of courage and conviction had begun to rise, embracing both Hindus and the Muslims alike. The expanding horizons of the Ideals of 'freedom of Faith' and Fraternity could not have failed to incur the wrath of a State committed to the obliteration of all autonomous sections of society. In his memo, the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir (1605—1627 A.D.) makes an explicit reference to this effect :

"At Goindwal which is situated on the bank of the River Biah (Bias), there lived a Hindu named Arjan. He was in the guise of a Pir or a Sheikh. Accordingly having captured by his manners and etiquette many of the simple minded Hindus and even of the ignorant and lowly Muslims, had beaten aloud the drum of his divinity and spiritual leadership. People called him Guru. From all sides fools and worshippers of fools in large number came to him. This shop had been active for three or four generations. For a very long time I had been pondering that either this false shop should be exterminated or he (Guru Arjan) should be brought into the folds of Islam."⁸

The things that stand out in bold relief in the aforesaid reference are :

1. By the time of Guru Arjan Dev, a fairly large number

people, including the Muslims, had entered the House of Guru Nanak.

2. The increasing popularity of the Faith was looked upon with complete disfavour by the Muslim monarch who was bent upon forcing the Guru to renounce his Faith in favour of Islam or exterminating him physically in the event of refusal on his part.

This is then the genesis of the causes leading to the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev in 1606 A.D. and the similar fate of Guru Tegh Bahadur later in 1675 A.D. is also attributable to an identical stance of the State, towards Sikhism. Thus by the time of the assumption of ecclesiastical as well as temporal responsibilities of the House of Guru Nanak by Guru Gobind Singh, notwithstanding the fact that, by then, the Faith of the Sikhs had taken quite deep roots, the complexion of the State had undergone a very perceptible change for the worse. The bigotry of the Muslim revivalists and the Hindu orthodoxy were at loggerheads for a long time and yet the two had connived with one another to keep the poor people in a state of perpetual bondage and ignorance, through vehement resistance to all forces of progress and change. In Sikhism they saw a common danger to their hegemony and, as such, not unoften, they would forge a combined front against the progressive Faith of the Sikhs in order to crush it. The powerful State, now completely under the influence, of the Muslim revivalists, was openly working for the establishment of a uni-central social order with no quarters for the non-confirmists. Besides, political sujagation, religious persecutions, economic exploitation and corruption at all levels still besmeared the face of the society.

In 1675 A.D., therefore, when at the age of just about nine years, Guru Gobind Singh was invested with the responsibilities of leading the socio-religious order against which the wrath of the Powerful State had only recently manifested itself by killing its head, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the age, obviously, was still like a drawn knife. Its edge was rather sharper than ever before and it hung more menacingly over the heads of those who dared to differ with the persons who wielded it. Rival:

claims to the Spiritual Seat staked by the splinter groups, represented by Minas, Dhirmalias and the Ramrayas added further to the difficulties of the Young Guru by accentuating internal dissensions on the one hand and by encouraging the none-too-friendly State to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Community on the other. The integrity of the Faith was further threatened by the corrupt practices that, over the years, had crept into the ranks of some of its institutions like that of Masands. Undaunted by the formidable nature of these difficulties, his own tender age, the paucity of resources at his command and against the advice of the sceptics and the weak-kneed among his own ranks, the Guru who, in his own words, had been divinely ordained

'To uphold Righteousness

*And to uproot Evil'*⁹

decided to face the challenge posed by these inimical forces. It was a question of life and death struggle for the Young Community and the Guru had no doubt that it could be ignored only at its own peril. His grasp of the situation was remarkable and the manner in which he was able to reorganize and rejuvenate his people so as to enable them to face the grim challenge then facing them and to endow them with a definite mission for the future is amazing. Seen in the socio-political context of the seventeenth century such a transformation brought about by one single individual was nothing short of miracle. Only a genius with a prophetic vision could have brought about so complete a transformation in the psyche of the people. 'The Guru's teachings had the magical effect of changing a pariah or outcast through an interminable line of heredity into a brave and staunch soldier.....This metamorphosis had been accomplished in defiance of the hide-bound prejudices and conservatism of the old Hindu religious systems. Prior to the times of the Sikh Gurus no general ever conceived the idea of raising an army from men who were believed to be unclean from their birth ; but the stimulating precepts of the tenth Guru altered who had hitherto been deemed to be the

dregs of humanity into warriors whose prowess and loyalty never failed their leaders.'¹⁰ What is important to remember here is that these brave soldiers were essentially a God-fearing and God-loving community dedicated to the establishment of 'a plural, free, open and progressive human society, God-oriented, non-aggressive, but firm and ever ready to combat the rise and growth of evil, through organised resistance and forward looking yet non-ambitious',¹¹ as against the closed, tyrannical, inequitable and an aggressive social order then prevailing. Thus the object that Guru Gobind Singh aimed at was 'great and laudable. It was the emancipation of the people from oppression and persecution ; and the means which he adopted were such as a comprehensive mind could alone have suggested'. 'To an atmosphere of gloom and degradation he brought a message of hope and deliverance and a will to do or to die.....He bore no enmity to any one but was the eternal enemy of tyranny and oppression whatever might be their brand or form. He had declared on them a never-ending war and created the Khalsa to carry it on.'¹²

The creation of the Khalsa is the crowning achievement of Guru Gobind Singh's life. After about two hundred years of teachings, during which period the Vth and the IXth Sikh Pontiffs had to lay down their lives to bring home to the people the real import of their divine message, the time had now come to ask them whether they were willing to pass through the ordeal of fire and follow the path of Guru Nanak with 'their heads on their palms.' And when they affirmed their allegiance to the Ideals of Sikhism even at the cost of their heads, Guru Gobind Singh had no doubt that they had come of age. He felt so elated that in his immortal songs he expressed his complete identification with them.

*'The Khalsa is flesh of my flesh,
and bone of my bone,
In a drop of water,
Behold thou the sea itself.'*

No Prophet in the world has ever avowed so complete an

identification with the people. Notwithstanding their professions of love and concern for the people, they have always stood at a higher-and unattainable—pedestal from them. It is the unique distinction of Sikhism alone that while proclaiming equality between man and man, it also endows the people with a status not only equal to their Guru but even a little higher at times.¹³ Having created the Khalsa in his own image, 'under the direct command of Akal (God)', Guru Gobind Singh invested it with abiding authority of the Guru. "As Guru Nanak seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have we made Khalsa the Guru.", said Guru Gobind Singh.

The historians who are ignorant of the basic doctrines of Sikhism are beguiled by some external developments under Guru Gobind Singh, like the institution of Khalsa, to infer from them, that, under the tenth Master 'Sikhism underwent a complete transformation or trans-valuation.'¹⁴ Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth. Those who may be inclined to follow closely the development of Sikhism from the times of Guru Nanak onward cannot fail to notice the basic unity of purpose running through the lives and the works of all the succeeding Gurus, including Guru Gobind Singh. The firm social commitments of the Faith, with categorical emphasis by its Founder and his successors, on combating the forces of evil and aggression with manly courage rather than running away from them could only culminate in the institution of the Khalsa. The emphasis on action as against passivity in circumstances involving flagrant violation of the basic human values has been recognized in Sikhism as the consummation of the religious life and as such the taking up of arms, under Guru Gobind Singh, is absolutely in harmony with the basic Sikh tenets. Guru Nanak himself prophesied nemesis on tyrants and visioned God as the Defender of Right and Chastiser of Evil. In a telling phrase, he refers to God as ASUR SANGHAR—Destroyer of Demon.¹⁵ There is a reference in 'Gurbilas' of Bhai Sukha Singh about Kalesi, the warrior, being addressed by Guru Arjan Dev on the excellence of the virtue of fighting for righteousness.¹⁶

Such a person, he says, attains salvation after his death. The establishment of the Order of the Khalsa, therefore, was, 'a logical development and entelachy of the teachings of Guru Nanak, revealed in certain SUTRAS of JAPU itself and fighting the Mughal ascendancy was an accident and not a cause.'¹⁷ Bhai Jodh Singh goes further and says that from the very beginning the Gurus had with them a complete idea all about the details of the form which Sikhism was to be given in terms of Khalsa.¹⁸

Therefore the recourse to arms, under Guru Gobind Singh, by the Sikhs, in the circumstances then obtaining, was absolutely in keeping with the basic postulates of the Faith and the creation of the Khalsa marks the culmination of the Sikh traditions. The Khalsa, though armed, is essentially an order of the persons deeply religious, socially enlightened, morally awakened and wedded to the Ideals of peace. It is, unfortunately, not quite often remembered that, under Sikhism, the use of arms has been sanctioned, for an unimpeachable good cause, only as the last resort, after all peaceful efforts have proved of no avail.

*"When the affairs are past redemption,
By all other means of good intention,
It is just to assert thy right
Through thy sword and a righteous fight."*

—Zafarnama

And the Khalsa is irrevocably committed to uphold Justice which, for them, is not the privilege or the advantage of the stronger, as Thresymachus, the sophist lawyer in Plato's Republic happens to believe,¹⁹ but is excellence of the soul.²⁰

Notwithstanding the tempestations of war, however, Guru Gobind Singh did not allow the Mission of Guru Nanak to run adrift. Even when engaged in war for the sake of 'Dharma', righteousness, the Sikhs were strictly enjoined to adhere to a strict code of moral conduct. Whatever the persecutions and provocations, the Guru did not allow his followers to stoop to the level of their adversaries. Qazi Nur Mohd. who accompanied

Ahmad Shah Abdali during the later's seventh invasion of India (1764-65) had the opportunity to watch the Sikh character from a very close quarter. Writing about them in his book, JANG NAMA, the Qazi, a sworn enemy of the Sikhs says,

"Truely they (the Sikhs) are like lions in battle and they surpass Hatim (in generosity) in times of peace. Leaving aside their mode of fighting, hear ye another point in which they excel all other fighting people..... In no case would they slay a coward nor would they put obstacles in the way of a fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth or ornaments of a woman, be she a well-to-do lady or an humble servant..... There is no adultery among these 'dogs' (out of hatred he refers to the Sikhs as dogs) nor are these 'mischievous' people given to thieving..... There is no thief at all among these 'dogs', nor is there any house breaker born amongst these miscreants.'. They do not make friends with adulterers or house-breakers....."²¹

Similar and more eloquent tributes have also been paid to the Sikhs by other none-too-friendly persons who were so much impressed by their conspicuously high moral character that they could not restrain their admiration for them.

"When in 1807 A.D.. during the course of a battle with the Sikhs, near Sialkot, the Afghan general, Jahan Khan, fled, leaving behind a number of muslim women, they fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Ali-uddin, the Muslim historian extols the moral excellence of the Sikh soldiers who, according to him, escorted them safely to Jammu."

And Lapel Griffin writing about them says,

"There were few stories in Sikh history of outrage to women and tortures to men."

Few people in the annals of history can boast of such self-speaking and telling tributes, from their sworn enemies. They should leave no doubt in the minds of even their worst detractors

that even when called upon to resort to the use of sword, the Sikhs always handled it with conspicuous restraint and compassion. During the worst of conflicts, when they were struggling for their very survival, the Majesty of their soul remained unbruised and whole, thanks to the genius of Guru Gobind Singh, who did not allow any trans-valuation in the Mission of Guru Nanak.

Lastly it is relevant to ask those who are scared of the use of force that but for the Order of the Khalsa who would have resisted the evil and aggressive designs of the Durranies against India? The Marhattas, the Rajputs and even the Mughals had tasted their sword and were lying in terror and submission. It were the Sikhs alone who were able to frustrate their designs. Prof. Banerji has no hesitation in recognizing that 'The Khalsas' greatest contribution to the cause of India was the wresting of the Punjab and the adjoining lands upto the frontier from the clutches of the Afghans. If they had not done so, some of these tracts might have been lost even geographically to India.'"²²

The elemental and the profound personality of Guru Gobind Singh has few parallels in the entire history of Mankind. Gifted with a handsome bearing, phenomenal courage, and an invincible spirit, he had an unbounded love for the poor, the down trodden and the dispossessed, for whose sake he sacrificed his holy parents, his four sons, his closest associates and finally himself as well. And yet, describing himself as their humble servant, he thanks the people for all that he could achieve. Paying rare tributes to them, he says :

*"All the battles I have won, against tyranny
I have fought with the devoted backing of these people ;
Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts,
Through their help I have escaped from harm ;
The love and the generosity of these Sikhs
Have enriched my heart and my home.
Through their grace I have attained all learning ;
Through their help, in battles, I have slain all enemies
I was born to serve them, through them I reached eminence.*

*What would I have been without their kind and ready help ?
 There are millions of insignificant people like me.
 True service is the service of these people :
 I am not inclined to serve others of higher caste ;
 Charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world,
 If given to such worthy people as these,
 All other sacrifices and charities are profitless
 From top to toe, whatever I call my own,
 All I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people."*²³

How could such a love fail to find an echo in the hearts of the people ? In the Guru they saw their Saviour, their SAJJAN (Friend), their benefactor and their beau ideal, whom, out of their unbounded love for him, they affectionately addressed as their 'Rider of the blue steed', 'Lord of the white hawk', and 'Wearer of the plumes'. Even when the hostile State, with its tremendous resources decreed death on all those who professed faith in Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, they preferred to be dismembered alive, skinned alive, scalped alive, sawed alive, boiled alive and broken on the wheels rather than countenance the demand of the State to renounce their love for the Guru and their faith in his teachings. Echoes of these abiding bonds of love and faith are still being heard in the very popular song, especially in the country side :

*"Let the entire world be estranged from me,
 But not my 'Lord of the plumes'."*²⁴

In order to accomplish the divine mission of combating the forces of evil and aggression and upholding righteousness, Guru Gobind Singh acquired rare skills in the use of arms. A superb swordsman, an ace archer, a lion hearted lancer, he was a general par excellence. During the armed conflicts, forced upon him and his followers by an enemy enjoying tremendous superiority in men and material, the laurels were always won by his camp. The contemporary evidence, including his own autobiography, provide graphic accounts of many incidents when, during many a battle, he was pitted against some of the most renowned generals, both Hindus and

Muslims ; however, there is not a single occasion when he allowed any of them to score over him. On the contrary, almost invariably, even the best among them were worsted by him in a manner which reduced them to nonentities. Many a time in the midst of raining death, he entered the field personally to retrieve seemingly hopeless positions and led his men to ultimate victories. "The defence that he extemporised at Chamkaur, where the Guru with only forty choosen companions kept at bay for several hours, a whole host of the opposing troops, has hardly a parallel...and leaves us in no doubt about his tactical genius,"²⁵

If one is amazed at the dexterity and the cosummate skill with which the Guru could use his arms, one simply marvels at the felicity with which he wielded his pen. His preference for the poetic compositions must have been due to its penetrating appeal. He seemed to have a natural genius for this mode of writing. One is woder-struck at the wealth of the literature produced by him in the midst of all those dangers and difficulties that almost ever continued to cast their threatening shadows over him, throughout his life. And when the richness of the contents and the range of his poetic expressions are taken into accounts, the impact of his achievements in this field is immeasurably enhanced. 'Rarely has poetry, in any language, recaptured the transcendent vision in such personal and realistic terms or inspired such a spirit of courage and heroism'. In whichever language he wrote, be it Brij, Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian or Punjabi, his command over it is complete. Scores of new words were coined by him and many new meters in the annals of poetry were introduced. "In Hindi, he developed a style, which for martial cadence, variety of form, and richness of imagination has remained unsurpassed since his times. In lines ranging from monosyllabic verse to long and multiplied Swayyas and Kabits, we seem to hear the torrential flow of hill streams or the galloping sweep of cavalry on the march. The intellect quivers in emotion and breaks out against superstition and hypocracy

into humour, irony and banter. His emotion is raised to the highest pitch of ecstasy when he communes with God."²⁶ In all his compositions the imagery is grand, the diction chaste, lyricism compelling and expression graphic.

Now whatever else Guru Gobind Singh might have been, he was first and foremost a great religious Prophet. 'None but a person of saintly dispositions, highly spiritual and with a complete resignation to the will of God could have behaved as he did during the most acute crisis of his life. Leaving his home and everything in the hands of the enemy, he bids farewell to Anandpur and with his ranks depleted and his family dispersed, his wives going in one direction and his mother and two younger sons he knew not where, he arrived at Chamkaur and is at once surrounded by the Mughals and the hill Chiefs. After a superhuman fight against the heaviest of odds in which he sees his two dearest sons and his chosen companions fall one after another before his very eyes, he has to leave the place and for sometime is hunted like a wild animal, now escaping in one direction and now in another, when news arrives of the barbarous and brutal murder of his two younger sons and the no less tragic death of his mother. He faces all this with the most supreme composure and serenely goes on with his work as if nothing has happened. He compiles a new recension of the Granth Sahib, adds to it his own compositions and busies himself in laying strong the foundation of Sikhism in the Malwa tract. Certainly no mere politician or a soldier could have done it.'²⁷ Immediately after losing his two elder sons and his closest disciples when he was unaware of the whereabouts and the fate of the younger sons and other members of his family, even as he lay, all by himself, being hotly persued by a ruthless enemy, in the jungles of Machhiwara, under a cruel winter sky, he, the son of God, reiterates his faith in the will of God, in a glorious song of hope and affirmation.

"Go, tell the beloved Lord

The condition of His yearning disciple ;

*Without Thee, rich coverings are an agony to us,
 And to live in the comforts of our households
 Is like living with snakes ! Our water pots
 Have become like pikes on which men are impaled.
 The cup we drink from has an edge like a dagger,
 Beloved, Thy turning away from us
 Is like what a beast endures from the slaughterer !
 With the Beloved a mattress of straw would please us,
 Without Him, in rich houses we are burnt alive.²⁸*

In the midst of such trials and tribulations, only a saint, at perfect peace with himself, could have sung such a song.

And those who, in ignorance of his divine mission, accuse him of bias against a particular community, the Muslims, must refer to his immortal song stressing the fundamental concepts of his gospel namely, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Men.

*"He is in the temple, He is in the mosque
 He is in the Hindu worship as He is in the Muslim*

prayer :

*Men are one though they appear different
 Gods and demons who guard the treasures
 Of the God of riches, the musicians celestial
 The Hindus and the Muslims are all one,
 Have each the habits of different environments.
 But all men have the same eyes, the same body,
 The same form compounded of the same four elements.
 Earth, air, fire and water.
 Thus the Abhekh of Hiudus and the Allah of
 Muslims are one,
 The Koran and the Puran praise the same Lord.
 They are all of one form,
 The one Lord made them all."²⁹*

It is unthinkable that such a man of God could ever harbour feelings of animosity towards any person, much less a community or a class. Some of his most devoted disciples were drawn from the Muslims who fought as resolutely on his

side as the Sikhs. His was a fight against the forces of injustice and oppression and not against any particular community or class. He opposed the Hindu orthodoxy as vehemently as he did the Muslim tyranny, and embraced the Muslim piety as warmly as of any other class or individual.

Guru Gobind Singh was, therefore, a versatile genius the like of whom the world has not seen. 'A law giver in the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his masnad and a Faqir in the society of the Khalsa',³⁰ he was also a poet par excellence, a profound philosopher, an organizer of unusual will and vision and, above all, the Prophet of the people who, through his baptism, poured life into his Sikhs and invested them with the dignity and piety of his own personality. 'There was about him a stern Olympian air which he imparted to his followers. His impress not only elevated and altered the constitution of their mind but, contrary to the experience of ethnological experts, it also operated materially and gave amplitude to their physical frames.'³¹

At the time of the assumption of the divine authority, at the tender age of just nine years, when his own people, terror stricken by the martyrdom of their Prophet and the lack of cohesion among their ranks, seemed to be utterly despaired and counselled conciliation rather than confrontation with the powers of the day, the Guru refused to be overwhelmed. Instead, he proclaimed his firm resolve to accomplish his divine Mission undaunted by the hazards of such a course. 'He would not remain silent out of fear or the threat of force', he told the people. 'Rights and Justice are scarcely obtained through prayers and pleadings, but have to be won through force and defended alike'. he further observed.³² Leading the people through the valley of fire and death, he invested them with a new courage, a new hope and a new resolve to wrest, for themselves as well as their fellow human beings, a status in conformity with their sacred mission and their sovereign rights. Enthused by the lofty Ideals of their Guru and inspired by his unrivalled sufferings and sacrifices for their

cause, the Sikhs now threw overboard all elements of despair and despondency and were determined to carry forward the Message of the Guru and honour their pledge with destiny. Once the way for them was illumined by the 'Prophet of the High Spirit', and they had a glimpse of their ultimate destiny, the Sikhs never, thereafter, looked back and even the meanest among them stood upto the mightiest for the cause of freedom and justice. Death henceforth was coveted like a crown. 'The Sikhs vied with each other for precedence in death', reads an early record of British India by J. T. Wheeler (London, 1878).

Thanks to the Mission of Guru Gobind Singh a new race had now been born which was the harbinger of the new Age, where justice was not the privilege of the strong and liberty was not the preserve of the feudal lords. Man had now come of age. Guru Gobind Singh had freed his body and his soul and had established his supermacy both in the temporal as well as the ecclestial spheres. When Brahmin, the traditional Clergy was bypassed and 'he wept and his heart began to burn like dry grass',³⁸ the Guru advised him to see the writings on the wall and accept the inevitable, with grace, and when Bhai Dya Singh walked into the court of Aurangzeb with sovereign dignity without bothering about the outmoded and over-loaded court etiquettes and without caring for the elaborate obsequiousness and delivered him 'Zafarnama', the Letter of Victory', laying bare his crimes and misdeeds and asking him to come for his chastisement, the traditional seat of the temporal power was divested of its self-styled divine attributes and in its place the sovereignty of the people was proclaimed. Long before the world had ever heard of Hobbes, Lock or Rousseau or the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, the socio-spiritual order of Guru Gobind Singh had fully imbibed them and put them into practice. Eversince then no sacrifice has been too great for the Sikhs to safeguard them. Such is the wonderful legacy of the Xth Nanak, the great Guru Gobind Singh.

When one tries to take into account all that Guru Gobind

Singh was able to accomplish in a life span of hardly two scores and two years, in that dark age, in the face of those unrelenting hostilities and with those insignificant resources at his command, one sometimes begins to wonder whether such a soul, in flesh and blood, ever walked on the face of this earth.

PART II

FATEHNAMA AND ZAFARNAMA

CHAPTER VI

FATEHNAMA AND ZAFARNAMA

Fatehnama and Zafarnama are two compositions of Guru Gobind Singh, in Persian verse, that he addressed to Aurangzeb, the then reigning monarch, after the fateful events that followed in the wake of the evacuation of Anandpur on the night of 21st December 1704.¹ After repeated reverses at the hands of the Sikhs the un-redeemably reactionary Hindu hill chiefs and their fiercely fanatical Mughal Overlords decided to forge a joint front against the Sikh fraternity and with the malicious intent of destroying its Guru and its precious heritage mustered together a formidable allied force that descended on the town of Anandpur, the seat of the Sikh Pontiff, in the hope of wiping it out with a single powerful thrust. However when the initial boastful attempts of the enemies were completely frustrated and the proudest among their ranks were humbled by the Sikhs under Guru Gobind Singh, they lost all courage and did not dare to venture near the Sikh entrenchments. The only course left with them, to save their face and their reputation, was to lay a siege to the town and with the help of far superior numbers and equipment, starve the Sikhs to submission by cutting off all possible sources of supplies and reinforcements. The siege continued for more than eight months and yet there was not the slightest sign of capitulation from the Sikhs. On the contrary, among their own ranks the discontentment was ever mounting, in the face of the onslaught of winter and the ever receding

sources of supplies. To avert the possibility of a complete and humiliating defeat, the allied generals, with the explicit approval of Aurangzeb, decided to resort to a stratagem that, under similar circumstances, always formed a part of the underhand armoury of Aurangzeb and his proteges.² To draw out the Sikhs from their impregnable entrenchments, the leaders of the enemy camp requested them to evacuate the town for sometime, in the larger interests of peace and goodwill and, through most solemn words pledged on their Holy texts, the Quran and the Gita, promised them, in the name of God, a safe conduct to any place to which the Sikhs may choose to retire. The Guru had no doubt that it was a death trap : however, the brave but the believing Sikhs were completely duped and the Guru, much against his will, had to acquiesce. The town, under such conditions, was finally abandoned on the fateful night of December 21st, 1704 and the horrible events that followed in its wake, thereafter, form the proudest part of the Story of the Sikhs. Drawn to the death trap of the treacherous enemy, in the name of God and peace, the small body of the Sikhs, famished and fatigued, with nothing else to sustain them except a firm faith in the justness of their cause, found themselves pitted against the heaviest of odds that posed a very potent threat not only to their own existence but also to the esteemed person of their Holy Guru, the embodiment of their sacred heritage. The gallant and the glorious manner in which these Sikhs, who could be counted on finger tips, under the inspiring leadership of their Guru, braved those seemingly impossible circumstances and ultimately succeeded in completely frustrating all the evil designs of the enemy, stands out as the tallest monument ever to the invincible Spirit of Man committed to the cause of safeguarding the sanctity of the birth rights of all men, in all climes and in all ages.

These 'Letters of admonition' or 'Epistles of Victory' as they are better known, embody the indomitable spirit of Guru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa, and their refusal to bow to the brutal will of a tyrant. Notwithstanding the tremendous losses

in men and material, including his children, and the temporary set backs, as a consequence of the amoral and treacherous tactics of the enemy, the Guru tells Aurangzeb that they should not lead him to believe that he had won. "His Khalsa remains invincible and is in a position to deliver death blows to all his evil and aggressive designs", the Guru reminds the King. The mood of the Guru is very much evident in verse no. 75 of Zafarnama where, addressing the King, he says,

*"Four tender lives that Thou didst claim
Would never, O King, our spirits maim ;
The coiled 'Cobra' of deadly stings
Is very much alive in the form of Singhs."*

Of these two compositions, Fatehnama is comparatively lesser known, having come to light at a much later date. There are some who are inclined to believe that the twenty four stanzas are only a small portion of the whole, the rest of which is still shrouded in mystery. There are others who tend to cast doubt on its authenticity and regard it as a later interpolation. However the internal evidence of the Composition, the language in which it is couched and the choice of the meter, when carefully assessed leave no doubt about its authorship. The stamp of the consummate skill of Guru Gobind Singh is unmistakably there. The chronology and the contents of the historic events connected with the life of the Great Master as contained in Fatehnama and later in Zafarnama, when taken together, read like a connected whole and provide conclusive evidence about the genuine character of Fatehnama.

Fatehnama appears to have been written almost immediately after the battle of Chamkaur and at a time when Guru Gobind Singh was not, as yet, aware of the fate of his two younger sons. This is borne out by its verse No. 14 wherein the Guru refers to the martyrdom of his two elder sons only. Says he,

*"Like a cunning and crafty jackal,
To treacherous tactics thou didst fall
And, thus, killed two of my sons,
But don't be deceived thou have won"*

The obvious reference is to the underhand means employed by the enemy to draw out the Khalsa from the fort of Anandpur and the subsequent battle at Chamkaur where the two elder sons of the Guru had to lay down their lives in defence of the improvised fortress.

Very evidently the date of this earlier Composition pertains to a period prior to the arrival of Guru Gobind Singh at Lamma Jatpura where, through a special messenger, he had come to know the grim tragedy enacted by Wazir Khan at Sirhind where, under orders of the Mughal Faujdar, his two younger sons had been bricked up alive and their grandmother had fallen under the weight of the grief. In all probability, therefore, Fatehnama was composed at Machhiwara where the Guru, after leaving Chamkaur, had the opportunity to stay for two days with Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan-the Pathan brothers. According to Sirdar Kapur Singh Bhai Dya Singh was entrusted with the task of delivering the Letter personally to Aurangzeb.

During his stay at Dina, Guru Gobind Singh appears to have received, from Aurangzeb, a reply to his earlier letter, Fatehnama. This is abundantly clear from the repeated references in Zafarnama in which the receipt of such a communication from Aurangzeb, through a special imperial messenger, is vouchsafed. For example in stanza No. 56 of Zafarnama, addressed to Aurangzeb, the Guru says,

*"If thou art honest in intention
And are true to what thou mention,
We do welcome what thou say,
Through thy Qazi who 's come to convey."*

Zafarnama, the better known Persian composition of Guru Gobind Singh, was written at Dina, sometimes in early 1705 A.D., evidently in reply to the aforesaid communication from the Mughal Monarch. The available historical evidence suggest that it was a much longer composition but, unfortunately, only about a hundred and eleven of its verses have so far been traced.

Zafarnama, like Fatehnama, is in chaste Persian verse and both the compositions are unique examples of epistolary poetry. In them the masnavi meter of Firdausi and Nizami has been employed and the choice of words is impeccable. Appropriate similies and metaphors have been used with telling effects. For example :

*"With limbs and skulls of warriors killed
The field was eminently filled.
Like so many bats and balls to play,
In the field, in heap, they lay."*

—Zafarnama

Besides being a tribute to the literary excellence of Guru Gobind Singh, these compositions are of immense historical value. As an authentic contemporary evidence, they provide an insight into the causes that bedevilled the relations between the Sikhs on one side and the Hindu hill chiefs and their Mughal suzerains on the other. They also help to trace the course of events connected with the most important phases of the historic conflict arising out of the determined stand taken by the Khalsa against the evil and aggressive designs of the Hindu orthodoxy and the Muslim bigotry, to safeguard the solemnity of human dignity to which their Faith is firmly committed. They also give us a glimpse of the heavy odds against which the Sikhs were then struggling. In verse No. 19 of Zafarnama, the Guru refers to the unequal fight at Chamkaur where just forty of his famished Sikhs were attacked by an enemy estimated to be about a million strong :

*"When a million strong horde,
All armed and blood thirsty,
Falleth suddenly upon,
A batch of mere forty,
Hungry all and tired,
Though brave and inspired
The odds are all too grave
For gods even to brave."*

While chiding the enemy for precipitating such an unequal fight and mocking at any claim of victory on its part, herein are-

enshrined the richest tributes to the invincible spirit of the Khalsa for whom the cost is of little consequence if the cause is valid.

"To make an upright and true declaration before a tyrant and perverted Sultan is an act of great religious merit", according to Hadees. Guru Gobind Singh peels skin after skin off the personality of Aurangzeb and lays bare, before him, his real self. He is severely indicted for his heinous acts of patricide, fratricide and homicide. 'Your hands are soiled with the blood of your father, brothers and thousands of innocent persons', the Guru reminds the King and warns him 'to be prepared for retributive justice on the Day of Judgement for all the atrocious acts committed by you. Your professions of adherence to the tenets of your Faith is a mere fraud, because, without the least qualms you have broken the most solemn words pledged by you on Quran.' and 'on the one hand you claim to be an Idol-breaker while on the other you aid and abet the idolaters.' :

*"Thy rosary O King is but a snare,
To entrap the people unaware ;
When thou make pretend to pray,
Wistfully thou watch thy prey."*

'This is your real self, O Aurangzeb', the Guru tells him.

There is, thus, an emphatic repudiation of the wide spread and commonly accepted view that 'in war, as in love, every thing is fair.' As against Kautaliyas code of the Hindus, the Machiavellian code of the West and the Muslim polity then in practice in India, Sikhism enjoins strict adherence to a certain basic code of ethical conduct even when engaged in a life and death struggle with an adversary. Denouncing the immoral conduct of the King and his men for wanton repudiation of their own solemn words pledged by them voluntarily, on their holy texts, the Guru says that if he had ever held out such solemn promises he would have upheld their sanctity even at the cost of his life.

*"Nothing could ever have led us astray,
From our self chosen path away
Had we sworn by the Words we believe
Falter ? Never, our life be relieve (d)."*

—Zafarnama

Particular emphasis is, therefore, laid in these compositions on the need for an upright and ethical conduct, on the part of an individual, embracing the entire gamut of his life. The deceit should not form the basis of the statecraft, according to Guru Gobind Singh. According to him, 'He who says one thing and intends another is not a worthy human being.' Any credibility gap between the thoughts, words and deeds of human beings tends to vitiate the entire social structure, giving rise to mutual mistrust which, sooner or later, is bound to culminate in bitter conflicts. "It was a passionate conviction of Guru Gobind Singh that unless this principle of open diplomacy is accepted and implemented in both the spheres, that is, in the sphere of relations between the rulers and the ruled and in the sphere of the relations between the states on the international level, the emergence of a Universal Culture as the basis for a global fraternity, is not possible. That the human mind has recently awakened to the urgency of this truth, is no mean tribute to the prescience and genius of Guru Gobind Singh."

In order to imbibe the real import of the main theme of these compositions, it is imperative to remember that moral action occupies a pre-eminent position in the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh. In 'Chandi Charittar', the Guru invokes the blessings of God for 'granting him the strength to pursue ethical conduct, come what way.' This is the keynote of his teachings and exhortations. According to the Hindu schools of thought 'Karma' is envisaged as ritualistic act⁷ or an act performed in the context of the caste duties, which may not be necessarily moral.⁸ Buddhism and Jainism also deny the virtue of any altruistic activity and the observations of Rousseau about medieval Christianity similarly highlight its complete apathy to the social and political miseries of the people. "The Christian's country", he says, 'is not oft his world. Provided he has

nothing to reproach himself with, it matters little to him whether all goes well or ill here below." Sikhism, in complete contrast, is very much concerned with the complexion of the socio-spiritual cum political order and its overall impact on the individual; hence the repeated stress in its tenets for enlightened and determined action aimed at promoting social justice and spiritual awakening, which are essentially inter-related." "The moral life, in its social aspect, is the spiritual life; it is spirituality in action," says Charles Moore, just as Guru Nanak had said, "Truth is higher but higher still is truthful living."⁹ The modern world is fortunately becoming unenchanted with the barren ethics of all those religious institutions that do not concern themselves with the socio-political fate of its adherents. The Fourth Assembly of the world Council which met at Uppsala (1968) put on record that "the Church must act, take a stand and march with those in society who cannot alone win their battle for justice, freedom and equality."

About three hundreds years before, precisely for these very reasons, the last Apostle of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, invoked the blessings of God to engage himself, heart and soul, to extricate the groaning humanity from under the crushing weight of tyranny and oppression-religious, social and political. He impressed upon his followers, as part of their religious duties, never to hesitate to safeguard not only their own basic rights but those of their fellow human beings as well, and never ever to forget God, while thus engaged.

*"Glory to the noble souls
Who on their earthly way
Carry upon their lips
The name of the Lord,
And ever contemplate
Deep within their hearts
The good fight's spirit."*¹¹

Sikhs are, therefore, enjoined to cultivate and to ever strive to establish a quality of life which is in harmony with

the cannons of Truth and socio-political justice. The enormity of difficulties should not deter the devotees to take up a just cause and whatever the risks the struggle must not be allowed to run adrift into unethical and immoral conduct, both in peace and in war. In Fatehnama and Zafarnama, the honesty of means is as much emphasized as the loftiness and the justness of the cause. Aurangzeb is strongly denounced not only, for his dastardly designs but also for the dishonest, unethical and immoral means that he invariably employed to wrest some advantage over his adversaries. "That shows," the Guru tells him, "you are not sincere in your affirmations to the tenets of your Faith. A man who is not true to his words stands condemned and is rejected as a counterfeit coin by man and God both.", Guru Gobind Singh, therefore, 'raises ethical conduct to a sovereign status and makes it as the true expression of the harmony of human personality with the will of God.

Lastly, the sanction for the use of arms in the oft quoted stanza of Zafarnama namely,

*"When the affairs are past redemption,
By all other means of peaceful intention,
It is just to assert thy right,
Through thy sword and a righteous fight."*

is, unfortunately, not invariably, understood in its proper perspective. The message of the stanza is two-pronged; bloodshed should be avoided as far as possible but at the same time the cause should not be abandoned merely because, as a last resort, it warrants the use of force. The use of arms is allowed, for a luminously good cause, of universal validity, after all other peaceful means for resolving the crisis have been completely exhausted. A very clear implication that, in such circumstances, the use of force, as an unavoidable ultimate necessity, must be limited to the bare minimum prominently pops out of these popular lines for all sensitive minds to take note of.

Peace with honour is, therefore, the primary passion with Guru Gobind Singh who invites the Mughal king to settle all the outstanding issues peacefully, through mutual talks, so that

there is no unnecessary bloodshed.¹² Notwithstanding the treacherous conduct of the enemy and its dastardly deeds, the Guru, without any feelings of animosity, expressed his preference for an amicable settlement through mutual negotiations. As an alternative, the Guru suggests to Aurangzeb the course of a personal duel so that large scale bloodshed of innocent people could be avoided.¹³ Such were the commitments of the last Prophet of the Sikhs to the cause of peace that guaranteed the honour and the dignity of the common man.

Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh who were entrusted with the task of delivering the 'Letter' personally to Aurangzeb at Ahmednagar, ultimately succeeded in their mission, albeit after some initial difficulties.¹⁴ Guru Gobind Singh's Letter to Aurangzeb appears to have produced the desired effect. The manner in which he was overwhelmed by the contents of 'Zafarnama' is indicated by the highly repentant and remorseful mood of the King in his last letters to his sons.¹⁵ This is further endorsed by the fact that after the receipt of the Letter from Guru Gobind Singh, the King sent imperial messengers to Talwandi Sabo inviting the Guru for a personal meeting in the South. To facilitate such a meeting, Munim Khan at Lahore was instructed 'to conciliate' Guru Gobind Singh and also to make satisfactory arrangements for his travel towards the South.¹⁶ It was apparently in response to such invitation that the Guru travelled towards Deccan from Talwandi Sabo by the end of 1706 A.D., although at Baghaur in Rajasthan, he got the news of Aurangzeb's death and then he decided to proceed towards Delhi.

FATEHNAMA

(1)

بنام خداوند تیغ و تبر
خداوند تیر و سنان و سپر

*Bows and Arrows, Swords and Spears,
That the brave in battles wear.
In their holy name we swear,
To tell the Truth sans any fear.*

(2)

خداوند مردان جنگ آزما
خداوند اسپان پا در هوا

*In the holy name of the brave,
Who take up arms in dangers grave,
And also by the steeds they ride,
Of fleeting feet and galloping stride.*

(3)

ہماں کو تُو را پاوشاہی بداد
بما دولتِ دینِ پناہی بداد

*By whose grace art thou a king,
And thy writ sweepeth everything
His very grace didst us endow,
To shield the faithful and the low*

(4)

تُو را ترکستازی بہ مکر و ربا
مرا چارہ سازی بہ صدق و صفا

*When loot and plunder is thy aim,
To cheat and fraud is in thy vein,
We art there to save and shield,
Truth and Faith art arms we wield.*

(5)

نہ زبید تُو را نامِ اورنگِ زیب
ز اورنگِ زیباں نہ یابد فریب

*Resorting ever to hoax and fraud,
Thou betray the trust of God;
Yet thou claimeth to be a king,
Do thou really deserve such a thing ?*

(6)

تسبیحت از سنجہ و رشتہ بیش
کز ان دانه سازی و زان دام خویش

*Thy rosary, O' king, is but a snare,
To entrap the people unaware,
When thou maketh pretend to pray,
Wistfully, thou watch thy prey.*

(7)

تو خاکِ پدر را به کردارِ زشت
به خونِ برادر بدادی سمرشت

*The mal-treatment of thy father,
And the blood of thy brothers,
Besmear, O' king, all thy face,
A slur, thou art, on thy race.*

(8)

وزاں خانہٗ خام کردی بنا
برائے در دولت خویش را

*On the blood and bones of thy own,
The sort of Kingdom thou have grown,
Grand though it may be in looks,
A false structure, it really is.*

من اکنوں بہ افضالِ پُرشِ اکال
کُنم ز آبِ آہن چُناں برشگال

*Through His grace, of such a grain,
We have showered now a rain,
With the water of the Steel,
And His help who is 'All-Steel'.*

کہ ہرگز ازاں چار دیوارِ شوم
نشانی نہ ماند بریں پاک بوم

*These holy showers, from the face,
Of any accursed and evil place,
Wash away the filth of oppression,
Injustice, tyranny and coercion.*

(11)

زِ کوهِ دکن تشنه کام آمدی
تر میواڑ، سب تلخ جام آمدی

*Thy southern campaigns and their devastation,
Thy Mewar efforts and their frustration,
Art but only straws in the wind,
A warning to thee, o' king, to mend.*

(12)

بریں سوچوں اکنوں نگاہت رود
کہ آں تلخی و تشنگی ات رود

*Thou, now, darest to cast thy gaze,
Towards Punjab and its fair face,
With covetous and avaricious eyes,
Thy thirst for blood seems to rise.*

(13)

چُناں آتھے زیرِ نعلت نہسم
ز پنجاب آبت نہ خوردن دہسم

*Punjab, for thee, 'ld be made so hot,
And all thy efforts brought to naught.
A drop of water, a moment of rest,
In vain, for them, 'ld thou make a quest.*

(14)

چہ شد گر شغالے بہ مکر و ریا
ہمیں کشت دو بچہ شیر را

*Like a cunning and crafty jackal,
To treacherous tactics thou didst fall,
And thus killed two of my sons,
But, don't be deceived thou have won.*

چوں شیرِ ثیاں زندہ ماند ہے
زِ تو انتقام ستاند ہے

*Like a lion, bold and brave,
We yet live and ever crave,
To it to see that thou must pay,
For what thou did in a heinous way.*

نہ دیگر گرائم بہ نامِ خُدا
کہ دیدم خدا و کلامِ خُدا

*On thy lips, and the name of God !
For much too long thou played this fraud,
Well do we know designs it conceal,
The 'god' thou 'serve', thy actions reveal*

(17)

بہ سوگند تو اعتبارے نہ ماند
مرا جز بہ شمشیر کارے نہ ماند

*No more, in us, thy words inspire,
The sort of faith thou doth desire,
We 'll hence in arms correspond,
The like of thee, to them, respond.*

(18)

توئی گرگِ باراں کشیدہ اگر
نہم نیز شیرے زدایم بدر

*Thou, like a wily wolf, may be,
In courage lacking, in cunning alee,
My men art more than a match for thee,
Like lions art they bold and free.*

اگر بازگفت و شنیدت به ماست
نمائم تَرّا جادهٔ پاک و راست

*If thou, in reason, thy faith repose,
We 'll suggest the way to compose,
Our disputes through mutual trust and talk,
A worthy way, for thee, to walk.*

به میدان دو لشکر صف آرا شوند
ز دُوری بهم آشکارا شوند
میان دو ماند دو فرسنگِ راه
چون آراسته گردد این رزم گاه

*But, if thou choose the path of fray,
Let facing a-distance our forces array,
Standing each two furlong a-spaced,
In such an order, the field be placed.*

ازاں پس دراں عرصہ کار زار
من آئیم بہ تزد تو با دو سوار

*Amidst such an arrangement of the field,
Both of us, our arms shall wield,
We 'll then challenge thee in thy den,
Riding to thee with two of my men.*

تو از ناز و نعمت ثمر خورده
ز جنگی جوانان نہ بر خورده

*Thou have so far enjoyed the fruits,
Of labours rendered by thy recruits,
Dare thee come unto our sight,
We 'll teach thee how to fight.*

بہ میدان بیا خود بہ تیغ و تبر
مکن خلق حِشّاق زیر و زبر

*Armed with sword and the shield,
Thou must personally take the field,
It is cowardly to fire humanity,
For thy evil aims and vanity.*

ZAFARNAMA

(1)

کمال کمالاتِ قائم کریم
رضا بخش و رازقِ رهاق و رحیم

*The Lord of wonders is Eternal,
Full of mercy and care Paternal,
Whose bounty doth us sustain,
Whose benignity doth us maintain.*

(2)

اماں بخش و بخشندہ و دستگیر
خطا بخش و روزی دہ و دل پذیر

*Dispenser of Justice, Peace and Generosity,
He is the only refuge in adversity;
Through His bounty He sustains us,
Through His mercy He forgives us.*

(3)

شہنشاہِ خوبی دہ و رہنمویں !
کہ بے گون و بے چون و چوں بے گوں

*Like a true King He doth guide us,
A bliss eternal He endows us;
He is sans any form or shade,
The like of Him cannot be made.*

(4)

نہ ساز و نہ باز و نہ فوج و نہ فرش
خداوندِ بخشنده عیش و عرش

*Power nor realm, pomp nor pelf,
Maketh one happy and a contented self,
Through His grace doth He bestow,
Joys of heaven and the earth below.*

(5)

جہاں پاک زیر است و ظاہر ظہور
عطا مے دہد ہنچو حاضر حضور

*Hallowed is the earth by Spirit Divine,
Which like Eternal Light doth shine,
Blessed are those who through His grace,
Behold His image in every face.*

(6)

عطا بخش او پاک پروردگار
رحیم است و روزی دہد ہر دیار

*The Holy Lord doth us maintain,
In His mercy He us sustain,
He is the eternal source of bliss,
For every soul in the universe.*

(7)

که صاحب دیار است و اعظم عظیم
که حُسن الجمال است و رازق رحیم

*He is the Lord of all domains,
And of all they doth contain,
Full of mercy and benign,
He is Radiant and Sublime.*

(8)

که صاحب شعور است عاجز نواز
غریب الپرست و غنیم الگداز

*He is the Lord of counsels wise,
The humble through His grace doth rise,
He is the refuge of lost and low,
And is vanquisher of the foe.*

شریعت پرست و فضیلت مآب
حقیقت شناس و نبی الکتاب

*The Scriptures and the Truth in them,
Art the gifts of God to men,
He is the source of all the laws,
Yet He abideth by the laws.*

که دانش پرده است و صاحب شعور
حقیقت شناس است و ظاهر ظهور

*He is the Father of all the wit,
And the shining source of Truth;
On who'er doth He shower His grace,
Beholdeth His image in every face.*

شَناِسَندَةُ عِلْمِ عَالَمِ خُدايَ
كُشائِنْدَةُ كَارِ عَالَمِ كُشائِ

*He alone doth know the mystry,
Of the Nature and its sophistry,
He alone can solve the riddle,
Of the wordly woes and troubles.*

گُذارِندَةُ كَارِ عَالَمِ بِكَمِيرِ
شَناِسَندَةُ عِلْمِ عَالَمِ اَمِيرِ

*He doth shape the Laws Supreme,
Of Nature and the earthly scene;
He alone doth hold the secret,
Of Laws Eternal and their merits.*

مرا اعتبارے برائیں حلف نیست
کہ ایندو گواہ است ویزداں یکیت

*In the holy name of God,
Who, of all us, is the Lord,
In His holy name we say,
We believe not what thou say.*

نہ قطرہ مرا اعتبارے بروست
کہ بخشی و دیواں ہمہ کذب گوست

*Thy words can never, in us, inspire,
The sort of trust thou may desire,
Thy men-Dewans, Bakshis and all,
Liars are they, alike they all.*

کے قولِ قرآن کُندِ اعتبار
ہماں روزِ آخرِ شوَد زار و خوار

*Thy words on Quran art but a snare,
To entrap the people unaware,
Who'er in them doth put his belief,
Repent he must and come to grief.*

ہمارا کسے سایہ آید بہ زیر
بر و دست دارد نہ زارِغِ دلیر

*Shadows of Phoenix on whom doth fall,
Blessed is he and luckiest of all,
Beyond the reach of Crow is he,
Matters not how brave it be.*

کسے پشت اُفتد پس شیرِ نر
نہ گیرد بُز و میش و آہو گذر

*Anyone under the protective hold,
Of a lion, brave and bold,
May rest in peace and need none fear,
A goat or sheep or any deer.*

بہ مصحف قسم خفیہ گر خوردے
نہ یک گام ہم پیش از اں بُردے

*Nothing 'id ever have led us astray,
From our self sought path away,
Had we sworn by what we believe,
Falter ? Never, our life be relieve (d).*

گر سنہ چہ کارے کند چہل نر
کہ دہ لک بر آید برو بے خبر

*When a million strong horde,
All armed and blood thirsty,
Falleth suddenly upon,
A batch of mere forty,
Hungry all and tired,
Though brave and inspired,
The odds are all too grave,
For gods even to brave.*

کہ پیمیاں شکن بے درنگ آمدند
میاں تیغ و تیر و تفنگ آمدند

*Trampling upon their own solemn words,
Armed with arrows, spears and swords,
Thy men in utter betrayal of trust,
Mounted, on us, a sudden thrust.*

بہ لاچارگی درمیاں آمدم
بہ تدبیر تیر و کماں آمدم

*When the treachery of the foes,
Made a mockery of their vows,
Armed with arrows and the bows,
We took the field to send them blows.*

(22)

چوں کار از ہمہ حیلے در گذشت
حلال است بُردن بہ شمشیر دست

*When the affairs are past redemption,
By all other means of peaceful intention,
It is just to assert thy right,
Through thy sword and a righteous fight.*

(23)

چہ قرآن قسم را کنم اعتبار
وگرنہ تو گوئی من این را چہ کار

*Who on earth 'ld ever believe,
Words on Quran, When thus deceived ?
But for the treachery of thy force,
How c'd we ever choose this course ?*

نہ دامنم کہ ایں مرد روباه پیچ
وگر ہرگزین رہ نیارو بہ پیچ

*Cunning, thy men are like a fox,
Treacherous, on us, they played a hoax,
Had we earlier known their way,
Scarce could we choose this way.*

ہر آں کس کہ قرآن بہ قول آیدش
نہ زو بستن و کشتنی بایدش

*Who on words of Quran doth swear,
He, in mind, must ever bear,
To respect the sanctity of the vow,
Not to assault who trust the vow.*

برنگِ مگس سایہ پوش آمدند
بہ یکبارگی درخروش آمدند

*In the manner of a swarm of bee,
Surging forth like a stormy sea,
Thy men launched a furious attack,
Shreiking, shouting, attired in black.*

ہر آن کس ز دیوار آمد بروں
بخوردن یکے تیر شد غرق خوں

*The moment anyone left his defence,
In an attempt to make an offence,
A single arrow from our bow,
In a pool of blood, laid him low*

کہ پیروں نہ آمد کسے ز اں حصار
نہ خوردند تیر و نہ گشتند حوار

*But whosoever dared not leave,
The safety wall that him conceal,
He could manage to escape,
Our deadly arrows, and was safe.*

چو دیدم کہ ناہر بیاید بجنگ
چشیدن یکے تیر من بے درنگ

*The moment didst we Nahar behold,
Taking the field in a manner bold,
A single arrow from our bow,
And was he there lying low.*

ہم آنکھ گرزد بوقتِ مصاف
لے خاناں خورند بیروں گراف

*Losing heart at the horrible sight,
Many a Afghan didst take to flight,
Filled with terror and the fear,
None didst ever there boast hear.*

کہ افغان دگیر بیامد بہ جنگ
چوں سیل رواں ہیمچو تیر و تفنگ

*Advancing like a furious flood,
Bursting with anger, thirsting for blood,
Another Afghan didst take to field,
Guns and arrows he didst wield.*

بے حملہ کردند بہ مردانگی
ہم از ہوشگی ہم ز دیوانگی

*Many a time didst he crave,
To attack our lines in manner brave,
Often mad with fits of anger,
But sometimes in a perfect manner.*

بے حملہ کرد و بے زخم خورد
دو کس را بجاں کشت و جاں ہم سپرد

*Many a attack didst he make,
Suffered many wounds in their wake,
Two men, of course, didst he claim,
But in the attempt he was slain.*

(34)

کہ آں خواجہ مردودے رُسوا و خوار
نہ آمد بہ مہیداں بہ مردانہ وار

*Hiding cowardly behind his men,
And taking shelter in his den,
The accursed Khawaja betrayed his profession,
By fighting not in a manly fashion*

(35)

دزلیغا! اگر رُوئے او دیدے
بیک تیر لاچار بخشیدے

*If only, in field, we could see him,
And hence could take an aim at him,
A single arrow from our bow,
Must have squarely laid him low.*

ہم آخر بے زخم تیر و تفنگ
دو سوئے بے کشتہ شد بے رنگ

*Havoc wrought by arrows and gun,
Took a heavy toll of men,
Many got wounded on each side,
There were many that had died.*

بے بان بارید و تیر و تفنگ
زمین گشت ہیمو گل لالہ رنگ

*Bows and arrows, guns and spears,
Drenched the earth in blood and tears,
Such was the amount of blood that bled,
The field was like a tulip red.*

سرو پائے انہوہ چنداں شدہ
کہ میداں پر از گوئے چوگاں شدہ

*With limbs and skulls of warriors killed
The field was eminently filled,
Like so many bats and balls to play,
In the field, in heap, they lay*

ترنگارِ تیر و ترنگِ کساں
بر آمدیکے ہا و ہو از جہاں

*The angry arrows on fatal flight,
From bows with strings deadly tight,
Raised, in action, such anguished cries,
That engulfed the earth and skies*

دگر شورش کیبر کیسہ کوشش
ز مردان مردان بروں رفت ہوش

*The angry archer's shrieking drives,
The wounded warriors' anguished cries,
Raised up such a hue and cry,
Bravest of brave, in terror, didst lie.*

ہم آخر چہ مردی کُند کارزار
کہ بر چہل تن آیدش بے شمار

*To hurle a horde of countless members,
Against a batch of forty in numbers,
Is a mockery of thy bravery,
And a slur on thy chivalry.*

چراغِ جہاں چوں شدہ بُرقعِ پوش
شہِ شب برآمد ہمہ جلوہ جوش

*When, on the face of sun, a veil,
Of darkness didst, at last, prevail,
The lovely moon of golden face,
Rose in sky with all its grace.*

ہر اک کس بقولِ خدا آیدش
کہ یزداں برو رہنما آیدش

*To God's will who doth resign,
And put their faith in words divine,
The crucial hours of dangers grave,
They are led by the Lord to brave.*

نہ پیچیدہ مُوئے نہ رنجیدہ تن
کہ بیروں خود آؤرد دشمن شکن

*Chastiser of foes of evil designs,
Who, in folly, forget the Sublime,
He led me safely of their cordon,
Without a scratch on my person.*

نہ دانم کہ این مردِ پیساں شکن
کہ دولت پرست است وایماں شکن

*We knew not that thou break, O'king,
Thy own solemn words for anything,
Thou, O'king, art just a pretender,
Pelf not Truth art thou a contender.*

نہ ایماں پرستی نہ اوضاعِ دین
نہ صاحب شناسی نہ محکمِ یقین

*Thy actions, O'king, scarce vindicate,
Thy claims of love for thy creed's dictate,
Infirmy in Faith, on thy part, indicate,
Lack of trust in the Lord's mandate.*

ہر آں کس کہ ایماں پرستی کند
نہ پیمانِ خودش پیش و پستی کند

*Those, in Faith, art true and firm,
To God's will they must confirm,
A pledge they do not lightly make,
Once committed, they never break.*

من این مرد را اعتبارے نہ الیت
چہ قرآن قسم الیت یزداں یکیت
بہ قرآن قسم صد کند اختیار
مرا فطرہ ناید از و اعتبار

*Such a soul we'd never believe,
His own solemn word who doth deceive,
Words on Quran though hundreds of time,
If thou pledge, we'll still decline.*

اگرچہ تُو را اعتبار آمدے
کمر بستہ پیشوار آمدے

*If thou art faithful to thy creed,
Thou art honour bound to proceed,
To redeem the sanctity of thy vow,
And make it not a piece of show*

کہ فرض است بر سر ترا این سخن
کہ قول خدا و قسم این بہ من

*By virtue of thy words to me,
Thou art morally bound to see,
That thy solemn words art honoured,
Or, thou, for ever, stand dishonoured.*

اگر حضرتِ خودِ ستادہ شود
بجان و دلے کار واضح بود

*If thou could only find a way,
To personally know the cause of fray,
Sincerely we 'ld tell aright,
The reasons of this furious fight.*

شمارا بہ فرض است کارے کئی
بموجب نوشتہ شمارے کئی
نوشتہ رسید و بگفتہ زُباں
بیاید کہ کارے بہ راحت رساں

*Thy oral words and written note,
We have received with the hope,
That thou 'll stand by what thou say,
By acting in a peaceful way.*

ہمیں مرد باید شود دیدہ و
نہ شکے دیگر در دہانے دیگر

*For a man to be a Man,
He must strive as best he can,
To prove his worth in such a way,
He thinketh alike what he doth say.*

چہ قاضی مراگفت بیرون نہ ام
اگر راستی خود بیادی قدم

*If thou art honest in intention,
And art true to what thou mention,
We do welcome what thou say,
Through thy Qazi Who's come to convey*

چوں آں قولِ قرآنِ بیاید نثر
رسانم ہماں را بہ نزدِ شما

*Thy words on Quran pledged to us,
We have still in tact with us,
They art hereby sent to thee,
Un-holy fraud, on us, to see*

چو تشریف در قصبہ کانگر گند
وزاں پس ملاقات با ہم شود

*To 'Kangar' thou may please repair,
A worthy welcome awaits thee there,
Mutually, there, on all affairs,
We 'll talk in a manner fair.*

نہ فترہ دریں را ہے خطرہ تراست
ہمہ قوم بیراڑ حکم مراست

*In event of thy visit here,
Slightest danger is not there,
To us, Brar's devoted loyalty,
Is sure guarantee of thy safety.*

بیا تا سخن خود زبانی کنیم
بروئے شما مہربانی کنیم

*If thou ever choose to come,
We 'll be pleased to thee welcome.
Amidst us, as an honoured guest,
And for peace, we 'll make a quest.*

یکے اسپ شائستہ یک ہزار
بیا تا بگیری بہ من ایں دیار

*As a mark of love and goodwill,
A worthy horse of a thousand skill,
Thou 'll receive from our hand,
On thy visit to this Land*

اگر تو بہ یزداں پرستی کنی
بکارِ مرا این نہ سستی کنی

*If thy faith in God is firm,
To righteous path thou must confirm,
Thou must promptly do thy best,
To act in a manner, we suggest.*

بباید کہ یزداں شناسی کنی
نہ گفتہ کساں کس خراشی کنی

*Thou, O'king, must bear in mind,
The will of God, Generous and kind,
To harm a person on just hearsay,
Isn't justice nor a fair play*

عجب است انصاف دین پروری
که حیف است صد حیف این سروری

*Thou, O'king, art ridiculed,
For the manner thou have ruled,
Thy acts, O'king, art not religious,
Being false and non-judicious.*

عجب این عجب است فتوے شما
بجز راستی حرف گفتن خطا

*To speak not truth and truth alone,
Is sin against God not man alone,
We art amazed at thy indictment,
Which is nothing but thy figment.*

مزن تیغ بر خون کس بے دریغ
تو نیز خون چرخ ریزد بہ تیغ

*Beware, O'king, of the wrath Divine,
Which comes into play for justice Sublime.
Soil not thy hands with other's blood,
Lest thou pay with thy own blood.*

تو غافل مشو مرو یزداں شناس
کہ او بے نیاز است از ہر سپاس

*The God's greatness and His fear,
Thou, in mind, must ever bear,
He is above any-praise or hail.
Thy empty words would not avail.*

کہ او بے محابست شاہانِ شاہ
زمین و زماں سچائے پادشاہ

*Thou in mind must ever bear,
The King of kings is sans any fear,
The Lord of earth and all the spheres,
Emperor true, He prevails everywhere.*

خداوندِ ایزدِ زمین و زماں
کُنڈراست ہر کسِ بکین و مکان

*His existence to none He owes,
And to none He ever bows,
Lord of earth and spheres all,
His domains extendeth over all*

ہم از پیر مورے ہم از پیل تن
کہ عاجز نوازست و غافل شکن

*The mean ant and the mighty elephant,
Both art created by His consent,
Through His grace and will divine,
Mighty are humbled and mean sublime(d).*

کہ اورا چُز اسم است عاجز نواز
کہ از ہر سپاس است او بے نیاز

*Cherisher of humble and the meek,
He showers His grace on those who seek,
He is beyond any praise or 'hail,
The empty words would not avail.*

کہ او بے نگوں است او بے چگوں
کہ او رہنما است و او رہنمویں

*The Lord supreme is incomparable,
Mightest of all, He is invincible,
A Teacher true and a perfect Guide,
In Him alone our faith doth abide,*

بہ قرآن قسم فرض بر سر ترا
رساں کار خوبی بگفتہ شما

*To redeem the sanctity of thy vow
Thou art honour bound to show
Abiding regard for what thou said
And acting strictly as it read*

(74)

بیاید تو دانش پرستی گئی
بکارے چرا چیرہ دستی گئی

*It really behoves thee to act,
With wisdom ripe and honest tact,
To deal cruelly with thy subject,
Is hateful and a shameful object.*

(75)

چہا شد کہ چوں بچگاں گشت چار
نکہ باقی بمائند پیچیدہ مار

*Four tender lives that thou didst claim,
Would never, O'king, our spirits maim,
The coiled Cobra of deadly stings,
Is very much alive in the form of 'Singhs' !*

چه مردی که استگر خموشاں کنی
که آتش و ماں را بدوشاں کنی
چه خوش گفت فروزئی خوش بیاں
نشتانی بود کارِ آهرمناں

*To fan the fire and still the embers,
Isn't bravery, thou must remember,
Firdausi hath very aptly said,
They cometh to grief who evil spread.*

که دربار گاهت من آیم شما
و زان روز باشی تو شاید هما

*Thy court, if ever, we do repair,
To make thee, of the facts, aware,
You 'll have to vouch for them,
On judgement day, for the truth in them.*

وگر نه تو این هم فراموش کند
ترا هم فراموش یزدان کند

*If, in thy pride, thou fail to heed,
Our counsel wise and thus proceed.
Then be it certain, Lord the true,
On judgement day, 'll forget thee too.*

اگر کار این بر تو بستی کمر
خداوند باشد ترا بهره ور

*If thou take to counsels wise,
Follow the path that we advise,
And proceed on it with honest face,
The God, on thee, 'll shower His grace.*

کہ ایں کارِ نیک است و دین پروری
چو یزداں شناسی بجاں برتری

*This noble cause, if thou do serve,
The grace of God thou shalt deserve,
Of ways of God, if thou art aware,
For goodness sake, thou must dare.*

تو را من نہ دانم کہ یزداں شناس
برآمد ز تو کارِ ہا و لخر اش

*With all the dreadful deeds from thee,
Thou claimeth a man of God to be ?
Those who do cause harm to men,
God doth turn His back on them.*

شناسد ہمیں تو بہ یزداں کریم
نہ خواہد ہمیں تو بدولت عظیم

*Thy dastardly deeds and sinful acts,
God is aware of all the facts,
He won't, for certain, let thee retain,
The treasures rich and vast domains.*

اگر صد بہ قرآن بخوردی قسم
مرا اعتبارے نہ یک ذرہ دم

*Words on Quran, though hundreds of time,
If thou pledge, we 'll still decline,
To repose our slightest faith in them,
As well we know the worth of them.*

خُوشْت شاه شاهانِ اورنگ زیب
که چالاک دست است چابک رکیب

که حُسن الجمال است و روشن ضمیر
خداوندِ ملک است و صاحبِ امیر

به ترتیبِ دانش به تدبیرِ تیغ
خداوندِ دیگ و خداوندِ تیغ

که روشن ضمیر است و حُسن الجمال
خداوندِ بخشندهٔ ملک و مال

که بخششِ کبیر است در جنگ کوه
ملائکِ صفت چو ثریا شکوه

شهنشاهِ اورنگ زیبِ لعین
ز داریِ دُور است و دُور است دین

*Thou, O'king, may be taking pride,
On thy skills to rule and ride,
On fair form, a mind awake wide,
On men and domains, far and wide,
On sword sharp and wisdom ripe,
On supplies stores of endless size,
On thy will to make men abide,
On bounteous nature, glory flung wide,
On Himalyan courage, in war, on thy side,
But, withal, Aurangzeb, O'king of kings,
Thou art despised for many things,
To man nor God art thou true,
Faith and justice art far from you.*

منم کُشته ام کوہیاں پُرفتن
کہ اُس بُت پرستند و من بُت شکن

*The crafty chieftains of the hill,
Many of them we had to kill,
For, at our being iconoclast,
These idolaters raised a holocaust.*

بہیں گردشِ بے وقائے زماں
پس پست افتد رساند زیاں

*Beware of the treachery of the age,
Of endless hues and faithless phase,
Where enemies doth arise at the back,
To stab, like cowards, in the back.*

بہیں قدرتِ نیک یزدان پاک
کہ از یک بہ وہ لک رساند ہلاک

*Behold the wonder of The Divine will,
Such heart it, in our men, instill,
One could face a legion of fame,
Though million strong, he put to shame.*

چه دشمن کند مهرباں است دوست
که بخشدگی کار بخشنده اوست

*What harm can ever an enemy do,
When God the great be kind to you.
His grace is ever so sublime,
To be full of bounty and benign.*

رهائی ده و رهنمائی دهد
زبان را صفت آشنائی دهد

*A Saviour true and a perfect guide,
To us, in grace, He doth provide,
A gifted tongue and a soul liberated,
To sing His praises and all He created.*

عُدو را چوں کور او کُند وقتِ کار
یتیمیاں بروں بُرو بے زخمِ خار

*In moments grave, when He is kind,
The enemy is so rendered blind,
That humble ones art then rescued,
Through His grace, unhurt, unviewed.*

ہر آں کس کزو راستبازی کُند
رحیمے برو رحم سازی کُند

*To whom the cause of Truth is dear,
And leadeth their life in God's fear,
On them the grace of Lord is there,
Through thick and thin art they secure.*

کسے خدمت آید بے قلب و جاں
خداوند بخشد بر او امان

*Him who serve with heart and soul,
And their faith in the Lord is whole,
Blessed art they with a lasting peace
The grace of God doth them release*

چوں دشمن براں حیلہ سازی کند
بر او خود خدا چارہ سازی کند

*When they art victim of aggression,
By an enemy of evil intention,
The Lord extendeth them protection,
Through His grace and holy action.*

اگر بر یک آمد ده و ده هزار
نگهبان او را شود کردگار

*If ever one of them didst face,
A legion of hundred thousands face,
The Lord 'll save him in some way,
And keep the enemy at a bay.*

(101 & 102)

ترا اگر نظر است بر فوج و زر
به ما را تنگه است یزداں نگر
که او را غرور است بر ملک و مال
به ما را پناه است یزداں اکال

*If thy pride is power and pelf,
And, on them, thou leanth thyself,
We, on Him, do pin our hope,
Our only refuge and the only hope.*

تو غافل مشو زیں سپنجی سرا
کہ عالم بگُذر دسرے جا بہ جا

*Thou, O' king, must bear in mind,
The world is just of a mortal kind.
Everyone be he high or low,
Depart he must and then lie low.*

کُجا شاهِ کِخسرو و جِجامِ جم
 کُجا شاهِ آدمِ سپردِ عِدم
 فریدونِ کُجا بهمنِ اسفندیار
 نه انقلابِ دارا در آمدِ شمار
 کُجا شاهِ اسکندر و شیرشاه
 که یک هم نماند است زنده به جاه
 کُجا شاهِ تیمور و بابر کُجا است
 همایونِ کُجا شاهِ اکبر کُجا است

*On the earth and its fair face,
 Of Humayun and Akbar Where's the trace ?
 Kai Khusro, Fridoon and Yar isfander,
 Sher Shah, Dara and Alexendar,
 Timur and Babur consigned are all,
 To eternal obvilion, forgotten all.*

بہیں گروش بے وفائے زماں
کہ ہر ہر گزرو نکین و مکاں

*Behold the faithlessness of the age,
Of fleeting nature and passing phase,
Men and mansions art sure to fall,
As and when they geth the Call.*

تو گر جبر عا جز خراشی کنی
قسم را بہ تیشہ تراشی کنی

*If people poor do thou torment,
Through arrogance and thy false ferment,
Thy oaths to ridicule thou hold,
And chop them off fold by fold.*

حقے یار باشد چه دشمن کند
اگر دشمنی را به صدف کند

*All the schemes of the evil enemy,
Let them be of facets many,
They, for sure, would never avail,
When God is there, to thee, not fail.*

عدو دشمنی گر هزار آورد
نه یک موئے او تا تار آورد

*If thousands evil do conspire,
And they, an enemy, do inspire,
When God's grace be with thee,
Not a single hair be harmed of thee.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

PART I

Life of Guru Gobind Singh

CHAPTER I

FROM PATNA TO PAONTA

1. There is disagreement about the date and even the year in which Guru Gobind Singh was born. While according to Irvine the Guru was born in 1660 A.D., Cunningham says it was November 1661 A.D. and Bute Shah places it in the year 1662 A.D. However, we have accepted 7 Poh Sudi Sambat 1723, as given in an old MS lying in the Gurudwara Patna Sahib, as the date of birth of the Guru. Gur bilas and Suraj Parkash also endorse this date.
2. Syad Bhikhan Shah was born in a syad family in village Syana, Tehsil Kaithal, Dist. Karnal. He was a disciple of Abul Musli Shah of Ambhta, Dist. Saharanpur. He spent most of his life in Thaska, Dist. Karnal. (Kahan Singh, Mahan Kosh, p.132) He had very cordial relations with Guru Tegh Bahadur whom he held in very high esteem. According to Macauliffe, the Syad hailed from Thaska, Dist. Karnal.
3. Eversince the visit of Guru Nanak, a large number of Sikh centres flourished in these areas. Dacca was the 'Hazuri Sangat' or the most important Sikh centre in these parts and controlled many centres of smaller size. The Guru seems to have spent about two years in Assam. For details Teja Singh Ganda Singh : short history of the Sikhs P. 55.
4. Dr. Fauja Singh : Development of Sikhism under the Gurus, P. 12.
5. Sarkar, J.N., History of Aurangzeb III, p. 265.
Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 53.
6. Khafi Khan : II, 652.
7. Guru Gobind Singh, Bachittar Natak, vii, 3.

8. Guru Tegh Bghadur, Shalok, 16.
9. Gurdwara Sis Ganj, Chandni Chowk, Delhi commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur and was raised in 1790 A.D. by S. Baghel Singh Karorsinghia.
10. Guru Gobind Singh : Bachittar Natak, 1954, p. 58.
11. The splinter groups Minas, Dhirmalias and Ramrayas had set up gurudoms of their own and enjoyed the patronage of the State.
12. Guru Gobind Singh : Bachittar Natak, vi, 29, 42, 43.
13. Ibid, viii, 31.
14. J.S. Grewal & S.S. Bal : Guru Gobind Singh. Appendix B.
15. As part of this Scheme Bhim Chind demanded tributes, 'Parsadi Elephant' and some other gifts that were presented to Guru Gobind Singh by the Raja of Assam, Rattan Rai, who, according to Sikh traditions, came to Makhawal in 1680 A.D.
16. J.S. Grewal & S.S. Bal, Guru Gobind Singh, p. 65.
17. During his stay at Paonta Guru Gobind Singh and Ram Rai met twice, once at Paonta and then at Dehra Doon. Macauliffe M.A. V. 17, 20 to 23.
18. Sirmur Gazetteer, p. 51 says that the Guru stayed at Paonta for 5 years.
Banerjee, I.B. Evolution of the Khalsa, II, 69.
19. For similar editorial comments see Chaubis Avtar, 7-22 Ram Avtar, 863-864, Krishan Avtar, 2491.

CHAPTER II

BAPTISM IN WARFARE

1. Bachittar Natak gives a very graphic account of this battle. Sukha Singh's Gurbilas gives 1689 as the year of the battle, which, however, cannot be correct. Prince Ajit Singh's date of birth is firmly established as Nov. 9, 1686; hence the battle could have been fought in Feb., 1686.
2. Before his return to Anandpur, the Guru went to Sadhaura, Laharpur, Toka, Tabra, and the State of Raipur. Macauliffe, M.A. V. p. 47.
Kartar Singh, Life of Guru Gobind Singh, p. 89.
3. According to Bhai Vir Singh the agreement was reached at Paonta which, however, is highly improbable.
4. Four forts namely Anandgarh, Kesgarh, Fatchgarh and Lohgarh were built.
5. Banerjee, I.B. : Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 78, 79.
Macauliffe M.A. : The Sikh Religion, V, p. 51.
Gurbilas VII, 31-37.
6. In Bachittar Natak, IX, I, Guru Gobind Singh says, 'The Raja requested me to assist him in the struggle and I joined his side.'
7. Bachittar Natak, IX, 23.
8. Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short history of the Sikhs, p. 65. Also f. n. 2.
9. Bachittar Natak. X, 6.
10. Ibid, XI, 5
Gurbilas makes a definite mention that the object was Anandpur.
11. Banerjee I. B. : Evolution of the Khalsa, II p. 87.
12. Bachittar Natak : XI, 69.
13. Ibid XIII, I.

14. According to G. C. Narang, 'Transformation of Sikhism', p. 156, 'The rajas were taught a severe lesson by Mirza Beg, the Imperial general. He inflicted upon them defeat after defeat, gave up the country to plunder, set fire to villages, took hundreds of prisoners and in order to make a lesson to them, had them shaved and their faces blackened, seated them on donkeys and made an exhibition of them throughout the disturbed area.'
15. Gurbilas XVI, 171, 172.

CHAPTER III

THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

1. Narang G. C. : Transformation of Sikhism, p. 25.
Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short history of the Sikhs, p. 66.
Sirdar Kapur Singh : Baisakhi Of Guru Gobind Singh, p. 12.
Bhai Jodh Singh : Gurmat Nirnai.
Bachitter Natak : V, 9.
2. Sirdar Kapur Singh : 'Sachi Sakhi', 1972, p. 22, 23.
3. Removal of the institution of 'Masands' as one of the most important measures of Guru Gobind Singh is mentioned in a news letter in 'Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla (Jaipur)'.
Sri Gursobha, 18 to 21, 24, 27, 28.
Reference to the corrupt practices of the 'Masands' is also found in Thirty Three Sawwaiyas of Guru Gobind Singh and in most of his Hukamnamas.
4. For details of the Baptismal ceremony see 'Baisakhi Of Guru Gobind Singh' by Sirdar Kapur Singh, Appendix I, entitled, 'How a Sikh is knighted a Singh, p. 53 to 83.
Also 'Sikhism' by Prof. Teja Singh, p. 113-118.
5. Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short history of the Sikhs p. 69.
Bate Shah, I, 407, 408.
6. Bate Shah : Tawarikh-i-Punjab, 1843, 405, 406.
Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, p. 93, 94.
Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short history of the Sikhs, p. 68, 69.
7. Teja Singh Ganda Singh : p. 69.
8. Suraj Parkash, iii-21.
Sri Gursobha, V
Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short history of the Sikhs, p. 69 f. n. 6.
9. Translation, sacred writings of the Sikhs, UNESCO p. 273.
10. J. S. Grewal & S. S. Bal. Guru Gobind Singh, p. 126.
11. Dr. Gupta, H. R. A history of the Sikh Gurus, p. 193-95.

CHAPTER IV

ESCALATION OF CONFLICT

1. Banerjee I. B. : Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 116, 126.
Sohan Lal. Umdatut Twarikh, 1885, I, 62.
2. To assert his Overlordship, the chief of Kahlur asked the Guru to vacate Anaadpur or agree to the payment of tribute which the Guru refused on the plea that the site had been bought by his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur.
3. According to Gurbilas the petition said,
 'Being the successor of the holy Guru Nanak, we allowed him (Guru Gobind Singh) to reside among us. On his attaining power, when we tried to restrain him, he formed an alliance with the Raja of Sirmur and went to Nahan. There he quarrelled with the Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar which led to the battle of Bhangani resulting in great destruction of life. The Guru, then, returned to Anandpur and established a new Sect, different from Hindus and Mohammadans, known as the Khalsa. Many followers from all the four castes have gathered around him and his power is ever increasing. He declares himself as the enemy of the Emperor and says that he will avenge the death of his father and that if we join him we will gain empire in this world and salvation in the next. He is displeased with us because we do not wish to oppose the just Govt. He is preparing to attack us and his followers *plunder and loot our villages. We pray for the protection of the Empire and beg for assistance to expel the Guru from Anandpur. Should the govt. delay to punish him, he will next attack the Capital of your empire.'
4. It is not quite clear to whom exactly the appeal was made ; to Aurangzeb in South, the Faujdar of Sarhind, the Mughal governor of Delhi or to Prince Muazzam in Kabul. Saina Pat uses the term 'Turk' and the 'Sultan'.

The exact chronology of the battles is also not certain. According to Saina Pat's Gur Sobha, the Rajputs first attacked Anandpur on their own and after the defeat of their first attack they sought the help of the Mughals.

5. Gur Sobha, 45.
Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 128.
6. According to Twarikh Guru Khalsa (I, 171) by Gian Singh the Raja of Kahlur was also accompanied by some other hill chiefs to the South and met the Emperor personally. The view is supported by Ahmad Shah (Tarikh-i-Hind), Khushwaqt Rai (Tawarikh-i-Sikhon), Mirza Mohd. Harisi (Ibratnama.)
7. Mirza Mohd. Harisi (Ibratnama, 66-67), Khushwaqt Rai (Tawarikh-i-Sikhan. 32), Ganesh Das (Tawarikh-i-Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab, 54), Ahmad Shah (Tarikh-i-Hind, 383).
8. All the Sikh chronicles, including Gur Sobha contain fairly long accounts of these incidents, which have been drawn upon by the later writers of Sikh history like Macauliffe and Banerjee.
9. Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, V, p. 185, 202, 204.
Gur Sobha, XIII, 33.
Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 133.
According to Koer Singh, a letter bearing the seal of Emperor Aurangzeb contained assurances for the safe passage of the Sikhs. It said,

*'Should we think evil of you
Let God Almighty punish us
Let the Quran be witness to this,
Should you leave this place, for once,
A great pleasure would it be unto us.'*

(Koer Singh)

According to Gura Kian Sakhian by Sarup Singh Kaushik,

'Guruji had been awaiting a reply to his letter to Emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan. On 5 Poh Samvat 1762, the reply of the Emperor Aurangzeb written on the outer cover of the Quran, was brought by a Qazi from Deccan to Anandpur-Guruji then, in consultations with prominent Sikhs like Udai Singh, decided to quit Anandgarh.'

10. Writing about the gallantry of Bhai Uday Singh, Koer Singh says in Gur Bilas Patshahi 10,
 'Uday Singh wielded his sword for three hours and killed a large number of Turks on the spot. Then the reinforcements arrived and he was sent to heaven.'
11. Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, P. 135.
12. According to Gur Bilas, one of the surviving Sikhs, Sant Singh, who resembled the Guru in appearance was dressed in the Guru's clothes and accoutrements and left at Chamkaur to beguile the enemy, when the Guru decided to leave that place.
13. They were the cousins of Nihang Khan, the Pathan chief of Kotla Nihang Khan, district Ropar, who was deeply devoted to the Guru.
14. According to some traditions, these Pathan brothers departed from Heran, a place further ahead.
15. Rai Kalla was also a close relative of Nihang Khan and was an old devotee of the Guru.
16. While leaving Rai Kot, Guru Gobind Singh presented a Sword to Rai Kalla (Rai Shahbaj Khan) with the injunction that it should not be worn or carried except in battle or in some great emergency.

"Parwardgar Tum ko salamat ba kramat Rakhe aur riyasat par mukim farmave. Aur is Shamaheer ko mutbarak samaj kar haja tor par apne pas rakhaa."

(Pb. Govt. Records 22-9-1854)

The sword was treasured with religious care, until the time of Rai Ilyas Khan, a family descendant, who took it with him on occasion of a sporting excursion contrary to earnest remonstrances of his followers. His horse happening to fall with aim, he drew the Sword to cut the stirrup leather by which he was entangled. The struggles of the horse, however, were violent and the Khan received from the drawn Sword a wound on his thigh, the haemorrhage from which quickly caused his death.

Many Sikh chiefs, including Maharaja Ranjit Singh, tried to procure this Sword but the Rai Kot family refused to part with the treasured possession. On the death of Rancee Bhag Bharee, the widow of Rai Ilyas Khan in April 1854, Rai

Imam Bukhal, who inherited the family property handed over the Sword to Mr. Henry Breerton, the then Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana, for presentation to the Governor-General.

(Based upon the findings of S. Nahar Singh, M.A.)

17. According to Sakhi Pothis, early in 1705 A.D., Guru Gobind Singh received a letter from Aurangzeb threatening him with another attack if he failed to visit him in Deccan. The letter read,

"There is only one empire and you agree with us in religious sentiments. So come here to see us. If you would not come, I will meet you with army and your reputation as a devotee will suffer. You may live in my kingdom as other saints and devotees do."

In all probability this communication was in reply to the earlier letter, Fatehnama, sent by the Guru to the King from Machhiwara.

18. Latif, Syad Mohammad, History of the Punjab p. 266.
 19. Trump, Ernest ; "The Guru added about 1,20,000 disciples at Talwandi Sabo." p. xcil.
 20. In the Akkam-i-Alamgiri the receipt of a letter from Guru Gobind Singh is acknowledged by the Emperor and his orders to Munim Khan of Lahore 'to conciliate' Guru Gobind Singh, and also to make arrangements for his travel towards the south may also be seen in the document. Ganda Singh, Makhiz, 74.
 21. Smith, Vincent, History of India, Oxford, 1920, p. 448.
 22. J.S. Grewal & S.S. Bal, Guru Gobind Singh, p. 148.
 23. The 'Hukamnama', dated 2nd October, 1707 A.D., addressed to the sangat of Dhaul, reads,

"The Guru will protect the Khalsa. With all happiness we met the Emperor. A robe of honour and a jewelled scarf worth sixty thousand rupees were presented to us. With God's grace the other things are progressing satisfactorily. In a few day we shall return to Anandpur. My instructions to the entire Khalsa Sangat is to remain

united. When we arrive at Kahlur, you should come to our presence fully armed. He who comes shall be rewarded."

24. Ganda Singh : 'Makhiz,' p. 82.
 Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, V, p. 232.
 Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 146.
25. Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of, the Khalsa, II, p. 144-145.
26. Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani, Vol. I, Letters Nos. 47, 69, 163, 193.
27. J.S. Grewal & S.S. Bal, Guru Gobind Singh, p. 152.
28. According to Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi,

"Guru Gobind Singh, One of the descendent of Nanak, had come into these districts to travel and accompanied the royal camp. He was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics and all sorts of people." Without any solid source to support their conclusion, Forster, Cunningham and Elphinstone aver that the Guru had accepted a military command under the Mughal King. This is evidently incorrect as indicated in Tarikh i-Bahadur Shahi. Also refer to Teja Singh Ganda Singh ; A short history of the Sikhs, p. 77, f.n. 2.

CHAPTER V

END OF THE JOURNEY

1. Ahmad Shah of Batala, in his 'Zikr-i-Guruaan va Ibtida-i-Singha va Mazhab-i-Eshan' gives a very interesting account of the first meeting between Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bahadur. According to Ahmad Shah, when Banda first saw the Guru, he prostrated before him and the following dialogue took place:

Madho Das : Who are you ?

Guru Gobind Singh : He whom you know.

Madho Das : What do I know ?

Guru Gobind Singh : Think it over in your mind.

Madho Das : So you are Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh : Yes.

Madho Das : What have you come for ?

Guru Gobind Singh : To convert you into a disciple of mine.

Madho Das : I submit, my Lord. I am your Banda.

2. Khushwant Singh : Homage to Guru Gobind Singh, p. 82.
3. Narang, G.C., Transformation of Sikhism.
Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short history of the Sikhs, p. 80.
4. Cunningham, J.D., A History of the Sikhs, p. 75.
5. Saina pat ; Gur Sobha, xviii, 8-37.

Teja Singh, Ganda Singh : A short History of the Sikhs, p. 78. According to the authors, Bahadur Shah had already granted a 'firman' in favour of the Guru, upon Wazir Khan, for payment of Rs. 300 per day. The faujdar was now lying in fear of his very life at the growing rapprochement between the Sikh Pontiff and Mughal Emperor and hence engineered the plot to kill the Guru.

According to Bakhat Mal's Khalsa-nama (19-22), an earlier attempt on the life of the Guru, through a hireling of Wazir Khan, had proved abortive.

Bhai Vir Singh in 'Kalghidhar Chamatkar' is of the opinion that Bahadur Shah was personally involved in the sordid drama of the death of Guru Gobind Singh with whom, in his hearts of heart, the King was unhappy for his having sent Banda Bahadur against Wazir Khan etc. He was finding it difficult to accept or reject the demands of the Guru and was anxious to get rid of him. The fact that the son of the assailant, Jamshed Khan, was presented, under order of the King, a dress of mourning lends credibility to this version. Dr. H.R. Gupta in his 'History of the Sikh Gurus' (P. 240) is of the same opinion.

6. Bahadur Shah, on hearing the news, sent an English Surgeon, Cole by name, to treat the Guru.
7. Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short History of the Sikhs, p. 79.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

1. Var Majh, xvi-1, p. 145.
2. Asa di Var, xvi-1, 2.
3. Bhai Gurdas Var I, 23.
4. Ibid, Var I, 24.
5. Dr. Mansukhani, Gobind Singh : Guru Nanak, Apostle of Love, pp. 32, 49.
6. Maru, 1039, 992 (A king deserves to remain on the throne by virtue of noble qualities, including reverence for and fear of the collective will of the people.)
7. Bhai Gurdas, Var I-33.
8. Tuzak-i-Jahangiri, p. 35.
9. Bachittar Natak, p. 71.
10. Macauliffe, M.A., The Sikh Religion, pp. 99, 100.
Irvine, William, Later Mughals, I, pp. 98, 99.
11. Sirdar Kapur Singh : 'Sikhs and Sikhism' (A speech delivered by the learned scholar in the Thompson School Auditorium at Vancouver, B.C., on 7th Oct; '74, under the auspices of All Canada Sikh Federation.)
12. Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 156.
13. The Gurn's sovereignty is full of twenty measures, but that of 'Sangat' is of twenty one measures.
ਗੁਰੂ ਬੀਸ ਬਿਸਵੇ, ਸੰਗਤ ਇਕੋਸ ਬਿਸਵੇ ।
14. Sarkar, J.N., History of Aurangzeb, III, pp. 301-302.
John, B. Noss. Man's Religion (1956), p. 282.
Toyanbee, Arnold; A study of History, V, p. 537.
15. Adi Granth : pp. 59, 224.
16. Bhai Sukha Singh : Gurbilas, 60-3.
Bhai Kahan Singh : Gurmatsudhakar, p. 554.
17. Sirdar Kapur Singh : Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, (Preface, p. 12).
18. Jodh Singh : Gurmat Nirnai, p. 281.

19. Robert S. Brumbagh : Plato for the modern age, p. 86.
20. Avtar Singh : Ethics of the Sikhs, p. 101.
21. Nur Mohd. Qazi : Jangnama, (xli, pp. 156-59), as quoted in 'Brief Account of the Sikh people' by S. Ganda Singh, p. 48.
22. Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 161.
23. Guru Gobind Singh : Sabad Hazare.
24. ਮੇਰਾ ਹੁਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਲਗੀਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਜਗ ਭਾਵੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਹੁਸ ਜਾਏ ।
25. Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 159.
26. Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short History of the Sikhs, p. 48.
27. Banerjee, I.B., Evolution of the Khalsa, II, p. 157-158.
28. Guru Gobind Singh : Sabad Hazare.
29. Guru Gobind Singh : Akāl Ustat.
30. Latif, Syad Mohd. History of the Punjab, p. 270.
31. Teja Singh Ganda Singh : A short History of the Sikhs, p. 71.
Cunningham, J.D., History of the Sikhs, p. 84.
Elphinstone, History of India, II, 564.
32. ਕੋਊ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੋ ਰਾਜ ਨਾ ਦੇ ਹੈ । ਜੋ ਲੇ ਹੈ ਨਿਜ ਬਲ ਸੇ ਲੇ ਹੈ ।
33. Guru Gobind Singh : Sabad Hazare.

PART II

Fatehnama and Zafarnama

1. Sirdar Kapur Singh : Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, p. 38.
2. Bernier : He (Aurangzeb) keeps his secrets closely guarded and is a past master in the art of deceit and treachery. (Travels in the Mughal Empire, Urdu Translation, p. 17).
Gulam Hussain : Syer-ul-Mutakhirin, p. 338.

(On the eve of the war of succession, Aurangzeb won over Murad Bakhsh, his brother, to his side through solemn assurances to him that, after the defeat of their common enemy, Dara, he intends to retire to Mecca and Madina, leaving the kingdom and the Crown to him. Murad, against earnest entreaties of his friends, fell into the trap. After the defeat of Dara, Aurangzeb had him arrested and imprisoned in the fort at Gwalior, where he was later executed.)

Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia do Mogor* (Translation William Irvine : Vol. III, Part II, p. 5, 316, 320).

(Aurangzeb had told his men that in case of an emergency they may hold out solemn assurances on Quaran to an enemy to gain an advantage. After going back on these oaths, all they have to do is to feed ten 'Fakirs' to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of God).

Latif, Syad Mohd. : *History of Punjab*, p. 172.

Khushal Khan Khatak, a poet-warrior of north-west, says about Aurangzeb,

"I know well Aurangzeb's justice and equity,
His orthodoxy in the Faith, his fasts and penances ;
His own brothers, time after time, cruelly slain by sword
His father overcome in battle, and thrown in prison.
Though a man strike his head on the ground thousand times,
Or by fasting bring his navel and spine together,

Unless he desires in truth to act with goodness,

His adorations are all false and a lie ;

The way of his tongue is one and that of his heart another,

Let his very vitals be torn, cut, and lacerated.

Outwardly the serpent is handsome, and well informed,

In the inward parts it is unclean, and filled with venom ;

Since Khushal's arms cannot reach the tyrant in the world,

May God have no mercy on him on the day of doom,"

(Quoted in Tirlochan Singh's *Guru Tegh Bahadur: Prophet and Martyr*, p. 268-69)

3. Sirdar Kapur Singh : 'Bauh Vistar', p. 69.
4. According to 'Bansawli Nama, 563, Gursobha, 560 and Bute Shah (Tarikh-i-Punjab), Zafarnama was composed after the battle of Muktsar. However, this does not seem to be correct.
5. According to some traditions, the Composition consisted of 1400 stanzas. Bansawli Nama (563), Syed Mohd. Latif (History of Punjab, p. 267), Randhir Singh (Sabad Murat) Some of them, however, include the 'Eleven Hakayats' in this composition.
6. Sirdar Kapur Singh : Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh, p. 40.
7. According to Bhatta 'the sacrificial acts themselves constitute Dharma'.
Dr. Avtar Singh : Guru Gobind Singh's theory of 'Karma' (Journal of Religious studies, Punjabi University, Vol. II, No. 1, Autumn 1970, p. 133).
8. Ibid, p. 13 .
Gita, 18, 45.
Donald K. Swearer : The Transformational Ethical Pattern of the Bhagvad Gita (Journal of Religious studies, Punjab University, Vol. IV, No. I, Spring 1972, p. 138).
9. Adi Granth : Sri Rag.
10. Ghose Sisirkumar : The heart of so great a mystery, (The journal of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Vol. IV, No. I, 1972, p. 30).
11. Epilogue to Krishan Avtar.
12. Fatehnama, 19 Zafarnama, 58.
13. Fatehnama, 20—24.
14. Bhai Dya Singh and Dharam Singh travelled through Delhi, Agra, Ujjain, Sher Garh, Burhanpur, Aurangabad and reached Ahmadnagar, where they stayed with Bhai Jetha Singh who helped them to find access to the Imperial court.
15. Smith, Vincent, History of India, Oxford, 1920, p. 440.
16. Ganda Singh's 'Makhiz', 74.

INDEX

A

- Abdali Ahmad Shah 50, 147
 Abul Muali Shah 141
 Adi Granth 20, 33, 40, 153, 154
 156
 Agra 34, 35, 156
 Ahmad Shah Batalvi 151
 Ahkam-i-Alamgiri 149
 Ahmad Nagar 70 156
 Ajit Singh (Prince) 22, 27, 28,
 143
 Akbar 4, 137
 Akhbarat-i-Darbar-Mualla
 (Jaipur) 32, 35, 145
 Alam Chand 21
 Alamgir 29, 30
 Ali-ud-din 50
 Alif Khan 10, 11
 Anandpur 4 to 7, 9 to 11, 21
 to 23, 24, 26, 27, 29,
 31, 32, 33, 40, 54, 61, 64
 75, 143, 147, 149, 155
 Angad Dev (Guru) 48
 Arjan Dev (Guru) 15, 40, 44,
 45, 48
 Aurangzeb 10, 11, 12, 14, 21, 24
 25, 26, 30, 34, 35, 57, 61
 62, 63, 64, 66, 69, 70,
 129, 146, 147, 149, 155
 Aurangabad 156
 Avtar Singh 154, 156

B

- Baaz Singh 38
 Babar 137
 Bachittar Natak 5, 10, 12, 141,
 142, 143, 145, 153
 Bachittar Singh 22
 Baghel Singh KarorSinghia
 142
 Baghaur 70
 Bahadur Shah 34, 35, 36, 38
 Baisakhi 13, 15
 Bakhat Mal 151

- Bal, S.S. 142, 145, 149
 Balia Chand 21
 Bansanwalinama 156
 Banerjee, I.B. 28, 51, 141, 142,
 143, 145, 147, 148, 150,
 153, 154
 Batton Court, Dr. 19
 Bernier 155
 Bhatta 156
 Bhago, Mai 32
 Bhangani 9, 10, 146
 Bhatinda 30
 Bhikhan Shah 1, 141
 Bhim Chand 7, 9 to 11, 12, 24
 Binod Singh 38
 Budhu Shah, Pir 8, 9, 10
 Burhanpur 37, 156
 Bute Shah 141, 145, 156

C

- Chamkaur 27, 28, 53, 54, 63, 64,
 65, 148
 Chandi-di-var 8
 Chandi Charittar 67
 Christianity 67
 Charles Moore 58
 Cole 152
 Cunningham 141, 150, 151, 154

D

- Dacca 3, 141
 Dalla 32
 Dayal Dass, Bhai 5
 Delhi 5, 16, 27, 32, 39, 142, 156
 Dharam Singh (Beloved one)
 16, 29, 70
 Dharamyud 15
 Dhaur 149
 Dilawar Khan 11
 Dina 30, 31, 64
 Dina Beg 21, 22
 Donald K. Swearer 156
 Dya Singh, Bhai (Beloved one)
 15, 29, 40, 57, 64, 70, 156
 Dwarka 16

E	
Elphinstone	150,154
Ernest Trump	149

F	
Fateh Shah	7,9,10,146
Fauja Singh	137
Firdausi	65,125
French Revolution	20
Forster	150
Fridon	137

G	
Ganda Singh	141,143,145,149 150,152,154,156
Gangoo	27
Ghani Khan	29,64
Ghumand Chand	22
Ghulam Hussain	155
Ghosh, Sisarkumar	150
Gita	62,156
Gobind Singh (Guru)	3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 15,16,17,18,19,20,21 22, 23, 24, 26—42, 44 to 49, 51—54, 56,57, 61—64, 67— 70, 141,143,145,146, 149,151,152,154
Grewal, J.S.	142,145,149,150
Gujri (Mata)	27
Gupta, H. R.	19,145,152
Gurukian Sakhian	26,147
Gurmet Nirnai	145
Gur Sobha	145,147,151,156
Gurdas, Bhai	152
Gurbilas	12,48,141,144, 146,148

H	
Hamayun	137
Hari Chand	10
Hargobind (Guru)	6,30,40,44
Hayat Khan	9,10
Henry Brereton	149
Heran	148
Himmat Chand (Beloved one)	16
Hobbes	57
Hussain Khan	11,12

I	
Ibrat Nama	147
Ilias Khan, Rai	148
Irvine William	153
Isfand Yar	137
Islam	4,44

J	
Jahangir	4,44
Jahan Khan	50
Jamshed Khan	152
Jang Nama	49,50,154
Jetha Singh, Bhai	49,145,153
John B. Noss	153
Jujhar Singh (Prince)	27,28

K	
Kahan Singh	38,141,153
Kahlur	7,10,22,23,25,35,40, 146, 150
Kai Khusro	137
Kalgidhar Chamatkar	152
Kalyan Chand, Bhai	3
Kambaksh	36
Kangar	115
Kapur Singh, Bhai Sahib	145,153,155,156
Kartar Singh	143
Kautaliya	66
Kesri Chand	22
Khafi Khan	4,38,141
Khalsa	13,14, 16—21, 23, 24,25,28,29,30,39,40 41,47,48,49,51,56,62 64,65,66,146,149
Khalsanama	151
Khidrana	31,32
Khushwaqat Rai	147
Khushwant Singh	151
Kiratpur	7
Kirpal	9
Koer Singh	33,147,148
Khushal Khan Khatak	155

L	
Lapel Griffin	50
Latif Mohd.	149,154,155,156
Locke	57

M	
Macauliffe	141,142,1 3,145, 150,153

Machiavelli	66
Machhiwara	29,54,64,149
Madina	156
Makhwal	7,142
Maktubat-i-Imam Rabani	150
Malerkotla	24,27
Man Singh	29
Mani Singh (Bhai)	33
Manucci, Nicolao	155
Masand	145
Mecca	156
Mati Dass, (Bhai)	5
Medni Parkash	7,8,10
Mehar Chand, Bhai	3
Mian Khan	10
Mirza Mohd.	147
Mirza Beg	12, 144
Muazzam	12,34,146
Muhkam Chand	
(Beloved one)	16
Munim Khan	33,70,149
N	
Nabi Khan	29,64
Nadaun	11
Nanded	33,37,38,40
Nahan	7,8,9,10,146
Nahar	101
Nahar Singh	149
Najabat Khan	9,10
Nanak, Guru	4,11,13,14,17, 19,23,39,41,42,43,45, 47,48,42,51,52,68, 141,146,150
Nand Chand	7
Nand Lal, Bhai	12
Narang, G.C.	144,145,151
Nihang Khan	148
Nirmoh	22
Nizami	65
Nura Mahi	30
Nur Mohd. Qazi	49,154
P	
Painde Khan	21,22
Pacnta Sahib	8,9,141,142
Patna	3,4,141
Pnoenix	94
Plato	49

Q	
Quran	6,62,66,94,98,110 111,115,128,147,155

R	
Rai Kalla	30,148
Ram Avtar	12,142
Ram Dass, Guru	40
Ram Rai	142
Randhir Singh	154
Ranjit Singh Maharaja	148
Robert S. Brumbangh	154
Rousseau	57,67

S	
Sabad Murat	156
Sadhaura	143
Saheri	27
Sahib Singh (Beloved one)	16
Sainapat	22,23,39,147,151
Sakhi Pothi	149
Sangtia, Bhai	12
Sant Singh	148
Santokh Singh, Bhai	25
Sarkar, J.N.	141,153
Sarup Singh Kaushik	26,147
Sati Dass, Bhai	5
Shahjahan	4
Shastar Nama Mala	8
Sher Shah	137
Sirhind	24,27,30,35,64,146
Sukha Singh, Bhai	48,143,153
Suraj Parkash	25,141,145
Syer-ul-Mutakhrin	155

T	
Tabra	143
Talwandi Sabo, (Dam	
Damma Sahib)	32,33,34,70,149
Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shah-i	
	37,150
Tarikh-i-Hind	147
Tarikh-i-Punjab	156
Tegh Bahadur, Guru	
	3,4,5,6,15,40,44,45,141 142,146
Tcja Singh	141,143,145, 152,154
Tetti Swayya	18,145

Thresymochus	49
Timur	137
Toka	143
Toyanbee, Arnold	153
Twarikh-i-Guru Khalsa	147
Twarikh-i-Sikhan	147
Twarikh-i-Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab	147

U

Udai Singh	22, 26, 147
Umadut-Twarikh	146

V

Varan Asharam Dharam	7, 117
Vincet Smith	149, 156
Vir Singh, Bhai	149, 156

W

Wazir Khan	22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 34, 38, 39, 64, 152
Wheeler, J. T.	57
Wordsworth	88

Z

Zabardast Khan	24
Zafarnama	25, 26, 29, 33, 33, 49, 57, 61, 63, 64, 65, 67, 69, 156

Zikr-i-Guruan va	
Ibtida-i-Singhan va	
mazhab-i-Ishan	151



Born in a devout 'Gursikh' family, the author received his early schooling at Chakwal now in Pakistan. After graduating from Khalsa College, Amritsar, he obtained Master of Art degrees in Economics and History from Punjab University. For sometime he has been a lecturer in History at Guru Kashi College, Damdama Sahib and later at Ramgharia College, Phagwara, where he has been teaching Post-graduate classes.

Although his literary interests cover a wide range, yet he is chiefly devoted to the study of history, philosophy & religion, with particular reference to Sikhism.

Some of his other literary contributions are 'Sword and Spirituality', 'The Grammar of Martyrdom' and 'Social & Political Concepts of Guru Nanak'.

